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ENGLAND ENSLAVED  
BY  
HER OWN SLAVE COLONIES.

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AN ADDRESS  
TO  
THE ELECTORS AND PEOPLE  
OF  
*The United Kingdom.*

BY JAMES STEPHEN, Esq.

*SECOND EDITION.*

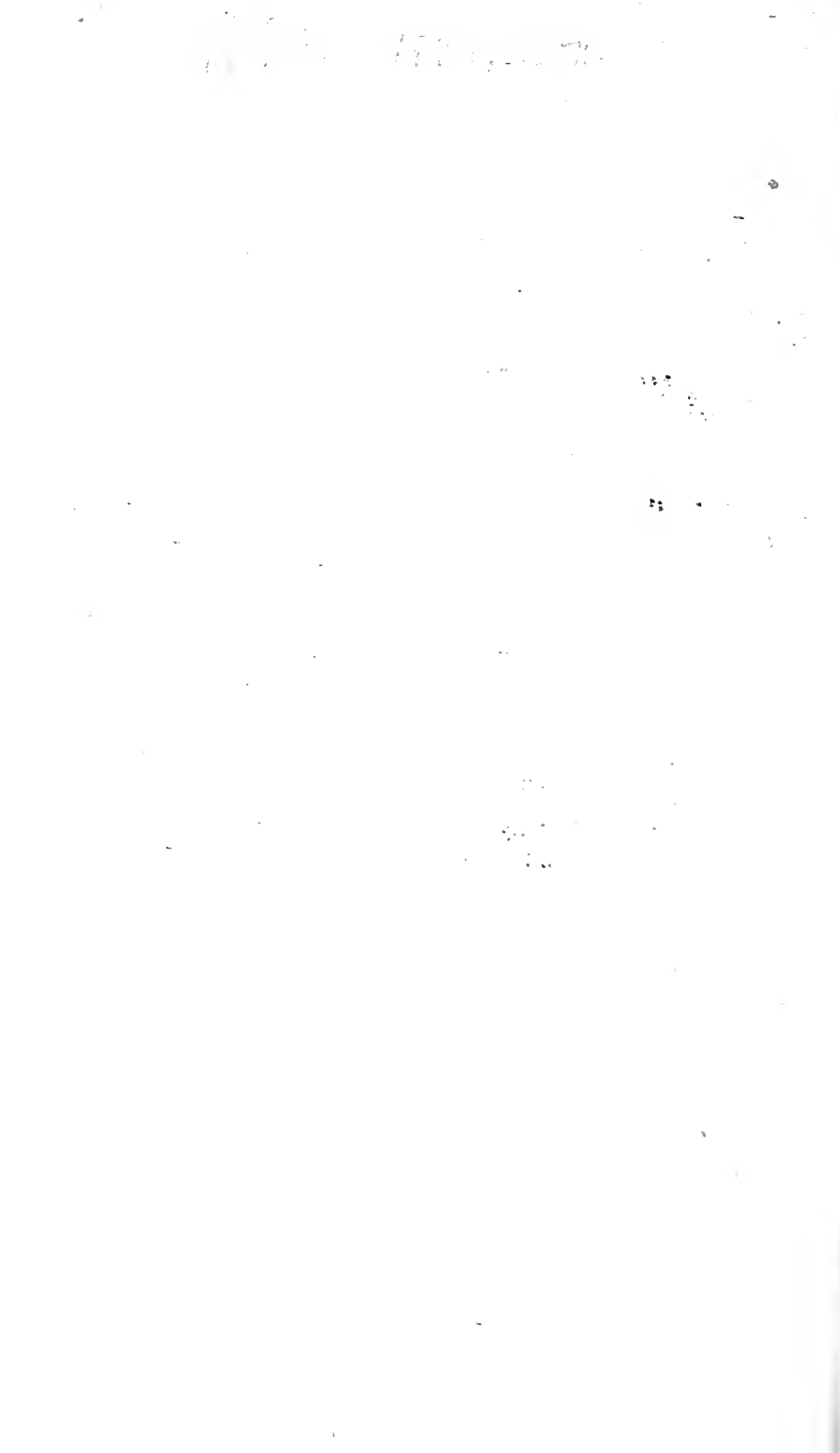
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1826.



# ENGLAND ENSLAVED

BY

## HER OWN SLAVE COLONIES.

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TO

THE ELECTORS AND PEOPLE

OF

*The United Kingdom.*

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MY FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

**WHEN** it was lately supposed that you would, by an immediate dissolution of Parliament, be called upon to exercise that noble birthright of British subjects the choice of their own lawgivers, I was employing my vacation leisure in the prosecution of a work in which I have been long engaged, the “Delineation of Colonial Slavery as it exists in Practice”; having already given to the public a pretty full and demonstrative account of it as it stands in point of law.

The work, in my own estimate, and in that of most of the friends of the enslaved Negroes, I might say of all among them whose sentiments on the subject I know, is of great importance; because gross misrepresentation of the facts of the case is the main expedient which our opponents have always too successfully employed; and the object of my labours is to wrest that instrument out of their hands, by proving all the positions in my second volume, as I have done in my first, from their own evidence alone. But I was induced to suspend those labours, by an application from some of the most respectable leaders in the cause of colonial reform, who requested me to write an address to the Electors of the United Kingdom, for the purpose of pointing out to them the critical position of that cause, and the duty of giving it their strenuous support in the use of their elective franchise. I complied; and before the decision of His Majesty’s Government on the question of a dissolution this autumn was made public, had made so much progress, that I was unwilling the fruit of that new effort should be lost; and therefore have completed the intended address, with some enlargements, which I submit to you in the following sheets.

The then expected occasion cannot long be postponed; and if I can effectually excite your efforts, they will not perhaps be the less influential and successful, because your present Representatives will have a further opportunity of showing their disposition on this great and interesting subject before they again solicit your suffrages.

The House of Commons will probably not soon be agitated by questions of war or peace, or by domestic controversies of any great importance; one excepted, on which I have no opinion to offer, and from the notice of which I shall cautiously abstain: but it will very soon have to determine whether we shall advance or retrograde in the path of justice, mercy, and expiation towards that most hapless and injured portion of our species, the much-oppressed African race. Early in the approaching Session, Parliament will be called on to decide whether we shall redeem the pledge to God and man given in the Resolutions of May 1823, or, yielding to colonial influence and clamour, basely forfeit that pledge, and leave upwards of eight hundred thousand of wretched fellow-creatures, with their yet unborn progeny, to perish in their chains.

No less than eighteen years have elapsed since Parliament, in voting the Slave-trade to be contrary to justice and humanity, virtually recorded the moral title of those oppressed and degraded human beings to their freedom; for it is plain, that a bondage iniquitously imposed cannot be rightfully prolonged. Necessity alone could justify the delaying for an hour the full restitution that was due to them; and such a necessity was accordingly alleged. It was asserted that a sudden enfranchisement was dangerous, and that therefore progressive means must be employed.

But how did we follow up those views? Sixteen times had the sun run his annual course, and still beheld all these victims of injustice toiling like brutes under the drivers, in all the moral filth of slavery, and all the darkness of pagan ignorance; tortured at discretion with the tremendous lash of the cart-whip, sold like cattle in a market, and condemned at the owner's will to a perpetual exile from their native homes, their wives, their husbands, their parents, and their children. A hundred thousand at least of hapless infants had in the mean time been born of the enslaved females in our colonies; and how had *they* been treated? Exempted from that state which it was held so hard and dangerous to alter? Educated in Christian principles? Prepared for exercising when adults the rights and duties of free men?—No: but left to learn idolatry from their parents, and their duties from the driver's whip; and to hand down the vices and the miseries of slavery, with the alleged difficulties and dangers of correcting them, to other generations.

Thus, up to May 1823, had we fulfilled those obligations which national contrition had recognised, and the plainest principles of justice and humanity imposed.

A new æra then seemed to have commenced with consolatory and cheering prospects. In consequence of numerous petitions from all parts of the country, and of a motion made thereon by Mr. Buxton, Mr. Canning (the leading minister in the House of Commons) came forward with apparent decision to take this pitiable and opprobrious case into the hands of Government, and himself moved resolutions which I need not here state to you at large; for in what part of the British empire have they not been proclaimed



by the press, and echoed by the voice of an applauding people? The first of them, which was the basis of the rest, was in these terms:—"Resolved, *That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for meliorating the condition of the Slave population in his Majesty's Colonies.*" They were all voted unanimously. The friends of the Slaves gladly consented to transfer the conduct of their cause to such potent hands, withdrew their own propositions, concurred in those of the Right Honourable Secretary, and gave to him their confidence, as well as their cordial applause. He had opened to them in his speech specific plans of progressive melioration and gradual enfranchisement, which, as far as they went, were satisfactory; and which gave an earnest that further reformatations, in the same spirit and of the same prudent character, would, when maturely considered, meet with the same support.

There was however one great drawback on their hopes, and one which was the most disheartening to those among them who knew the Colonies the best; for Mr. Canning intimated his practical plan to be, not the immediate introduction of any of his proposed measures by authority of Parliament, but the recommendation of them by the Crown to the Assemblies.

The experienced friends of the Slaves must have lost their memories or their understandings, if they had entertained a hope that such a course would produce any good effect. They saw in it, if not frustration and positive mischief, at least certain disappointment and delay. - Recommendation to the Assemblies!! Why, the experiment had been tried repeatedly, during a period of twenty-six years, as well before as after the abolition of the Slave-trade; and had uniformly and totally failed. The Crown, the Parliament, and that far more influential body, the West India Committee of this country, with Mr. Ellis at the head of it, had all recommended, supplicated, and even menaced, in vain. Not a single Assembly had deigned to relax one cord of their rigorous bondage; or to adopt a single measure that had been proposed to them for the temporal or spiritual benefit of the Slaves, except in a way manifestly evasive, and plainly intended, as well as proved by experience, to be useless; while some of those inexorable bodies had even met the solicitations of their Sovereign, and the resolutions of the supreme legislature, with express rejection and contempt. Recommendation to the *Assemblies!!!* to the authors of every wrong to be redressed! of every oppression to be mitigated! to Slave-masters, the representatives of Slave-masters, hardened by familiarity with the odious system in which they have been long personally engaged, and surrounded with crowds of indigent and vulgar whites, to whom slavery yields a sordid subsistence, and the degradation of the blacks is privilege and respect! You might as well recommend toleration to Spanish Inquisitors, or Grecian liberty to the Turkish Divan.

Most reasonable therefore might the friends of the Slaves have regarded this part of the Right Honourable Secretary's plan, as a ground not only of dissatisfaction, but distrust; had he not guarded

it by declaring that means should, if necessary, be employed to make the recommendation effectual, and to subdue any contumacy that might be found in the Assemblies, by Parliamentary compulsion.

Still, the well-informed advocates of reformation were reasonably alarmed. They did not doubt Mr. Canning's sincerity. The general liberality of his principles is not less unquestionable than his transcendent eloquence; and he had been an early friend to the Abolition. But they saw from this hopeless project that he laboured under a gross delusion as to the true state of the colonial mind; and they knew the formidable influence, both public and private, from which he would have to unfetter himself, before he could oppose himself effectually to that storm that he was about to raise in the Colonies, and make his way to his ulterior purpose.

They knew well from long experience how little reliance was to be placed on that apparent disposition which his West Indian friends, and the proprietors resident here had, in general, manifested in Parliament to support the measures in question. These gentlemen are always on the side of melioration when it is to be referred to the Assemblies, but never when it is proposed to be effected by the only practicable means; and it is no new thing with them thus to save their own credit in the first instance, and then support with all their collective weight in parliament the opposition of their friends and agents abroad to the very propositions in which they themselves have expressly concurred at home.

Under these circumstances, the friends of the Slaves have been strangely found fault with for still endeavouring to defend their cause and themselves before the British public, and to guide by necessary information that popular voice which is their only sure ally. They well knew, that the best intentioned and most powerful Administration would, without that support, find it difficult or impossible to stem the broad and deep tide of Colonial influence, and carry into effect any reformation worthy of the name. The abolition of the Slave-trade, after a struggle of thirty years, would have been finally lost, though supported by Mr. Pitt and many of his powerful colleagues, and the nation would have still been undelivered from the shame and guilt of that horrible traffic, if the public voice had not supported the influence of the Crown, though in the hands of such ministers as Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox, against the clamours of the Colonies, and the interest of their too powerful party.

Had these views been disputable in May 1823, they would long since have ceased to be so. The experiment has again been tried; and what has been the result? To the *mother country*, disparagement of her dignity, insolent denial of her constitutional authority, aggravation of her Colonial expenses, additional destruction of her brave troops in a sickly and inglorious service:—to the *Slaves*, a procreation of hopes the most interesting that ever cheered the hearts of men in their unhappy situation, only to be cruelly strangled in their birth; to many of them bloodshed and death, and to many

more the privation of those religious benefits most scantily enjoyed before, which were their only human comfort.

Yes, my generous and humane countrymen, these have been the fruits, and without the aid of your further united efforts, these, and many more such horrors as those of Demerara and Jamaica, will be the only fruits of your petitions, and of the resolutions of your representatives in parliament, that "effectual and decisive measures should be adopted to meliorate the condition of these our unfortunate fellow-subjects." Two years and seven months have since elapsed; and the condition of many of them, probably several hundreds, has indeed been effectually meliorated,—for they have been sent to a world where injustice, oppression, and cruelty can no longer reach them. The musket and the gibbet have given to them a happy, though painful manumission. Even those to whom the mercy of a West Indian Court assigned only a thousand lashes each by the lacerating whip, have been thus finally liberated, if uncontradicted and most credible report may be trusted; but as to the remainder of the eight hundred thousand hapless fellow-creatures for whom your pity and remorse vainly interceded, their condition, with a local exception or two of small account, has if possible been altered for the worse. Bitter disappointment has aggravated their former wretchedness; and to the multiplied oppressions of avarice have been added those excited by a crafty and cruel policy, by suspicion, hatred, and revenge. Every insurrectionary movement, however occasioned, and however partial, has been treated as rebellion; every plantation broil, or *strike of work*, as insurrection; every expression of discontent, or even of hope, founded on the benignant intentions of Parliament and the Crown, as full evidence of a seditious plot; and all alike have been sure consignment to a Slave Court;—in other words, to conviction and banishment or death. Nay the most cautious prudence, combined with the purest innocence, has been no security; for the assertion of a fellow-slave, however profligate, and however improbable his tale, has been taken as sufficient evidence against the Negroes accused. You are told by their oppressors that they are all too low in morals to be heard as witnesses against a white man, even before a West Indian jury of his own order, and when there is no temptation to deceive; and yet their testimony is implicitly trusted and relied on, when their reward for disclosing a pretended plot is pardon, if they avow themselves to have been accomplices, and if not, the irresistible bribe of freedom. If any fair man thinks these statements too strong, let him read the trial of the Missionary Smith, with the examinations that preceded it, and the trials for the late conspiracies in Jamaica, as printed by the House of Commons the last session; and if he does not entirely concur with me, I am content to forfeit his confidence as to every other fact I state.

Now, to what can these evils be ascribed, but to the fatal course that has been taken, in referring, for a twentieth time, to the Colonial authorities, a work to which they are avowedly, violently, and

incurably averse? What was it, but to invite the rash and angry opposition we have found? They tell us, and they tell us sincerely, perhaps, however erroneously, that the proposed measures will be ruinous to their property, and dangerous to their lives; and yet we desire them to adopt and frame those very measures by their own legislative power. They refused to adopt them, or any one of them, even when assured by their own agents and partisans in this country that there was no other way of preserving their then beloved Slave-trade; yet we expect compliance, when refusal can have no worse effect than the enactment of the same measures by the British Legislature. Even that consequence, we have taught them to believe or know, is not to be apprehended. In eight-and-twenty years of obstinate opposition to the sense of Parliament, its active interposition has not once ensued; and in one instance, that of Mr. Wilberforce's Register Bill, it was attempted in vain, though clearly necessary for the purpose of giving effect to the abolition of the Slave-trade.

That precedent was still more fatally instructive. It taught them that a sure way to prevent Parliamentary interposition, was to add to refusal violence and uproar, mischief and alarm.

These means, indeed, were then found rather costly to a particular colony. They raved so loudly and so long in the ears of their Slaves, that those poor beings at length thought them in earnest, in affirming that registration was enfranchisement, and that by the will of the mother country they were to be Slaves no longer. The insurrection of Barbadoes was therefore very naturally produced. But this was a lucky, as well as a very partial mischief. All the colonies gained their point by it. The framing of Register Acts was left implicitly to themselves; and fences of cobweb, instead of adamant, will consequently be found between them and the Slave-trade, whenever the high price of sugar, or the depopulating effects of Slavery, may tempt them to resume it.

After this, who can wonder at the plots in Jamaica, or the insurrection at Demerara, or the dreadful measures of fury and alarm that followed? Even Barbadoes itself, in spite of its experienced evils, saw more of convenient consequence, than present danger, in adding to the renewal of former provocatives, that of driving away the missionaries, pulling down their chapel, and laying the laws prostrate before insurgent violence for successive days under the eyes of the local Government.

Nor can we be surprised that the Assemblies in this case have treated the recommendations of the Crown, and the voice of Parliament, with more than their former disrespect; and refused to adopt any of the very moderate specific reforms proposed to them. Small though those reforms must appear in *our* eyes, in *theirs*, had not their own former pretences been grossly false, they must have been smaller still; and for the most part the mere enactment, by law, of what before was general practice. They were desired, for instance, to secure a Sabbath rest to their Slaves, which they had a

hundred times boldly asserted was already possessed by them. They were desired to exempt their females from those cruel and indecent punishments, the usage of which they had as often indignantly denied. They were asked to lay aside the driving whip, which they had so positively asserted to be wholly inactive, and a mere emblem of authority, that Ministers, in the recommendation itself, soothingly gave colour to the ridiculous pretence, desiring that the whip should no longer be carried into the field by the driver, *as an emblem of his power*.

But here lay no small part of the provocation. They were caught in the mesh of their own falsehoods and delusions. The Sabbath is in fact kept only in the cane pieces; while it is a working day in the provision grounds, and in journeys to a distant market. To abolish such profanation, would be to compel the master to find food for his Slaves; or to give them another day that they might be able to raise it for themselves. The proposed immunity of the females, they knew would have been a still greater sacrifice; because they are in fact worked, coerced, and disciplined in common with the males; and, as the Colonists are now driven to assert, equally or more than equally require it. As to the inactive cart-whip, the *emblem* or *symbol*, the *beadle's laced hat*, as some of them before had the effrontery to call it, it is now confessed to be the main spring of the machine; and that to take it from the driver's hand would be ruin to the master, and danger to the State. Though little therefore was asked on their own false premises, it was much, very much, in the case that really exists; and far more than the Planters or their Assemblies ever mean to concede. To repudiate their own former assertions was mortifying; but to adhere to them at the hazard of their actual system would have been still more unpalatable; and the dilemma was not the less provoking because it was the effect of their own previous deceptions.

But though refusal was to be expected, insult, it may be thought, might have been forborne. The Colonists (wisely perhaps if their ends were wise) were of a different opinion; and the Ministers of the Crown, for acting under the advice of Parliament, were made the objects of coarse invective, as well as contemptuous repulse.

And what has been the consequence? Have Ministers come to Parliament for its assistance to support its own dignity, and give effect to its own resolves? Has that supreme legislature at length effectually interposed, and made good its promises to the unfortunate objects of its compassion and remorse, ordaining by its own authority what has been insolently denied to its mediation? Such was the ulterior course that you were expressly warranted by Government to expect, if the Assemblies proved contumacious; and yet if their conduct has not amounted to contumacy, it is hard to say what more they could have done to satisfy the full meaning of that term. But nothing has been enacted, nothing has been proposed, in Parliament, no communication has been made by Ministers on the subject, except the humiliating despatches of the

Colonial governors containing full details of all these opprobrious facts.

It would be unjust to His Majesty's Ministers, not to distinguish here between those Colonies which are cursed with representative Assemblies, and those which have escaped that misfortune, and over which the Crown possesses the power of interior legislation. In the latter, Trinidad especially, some advances have been made towards giving effect to the Parliamentary Resolutions. But even in these, the unwise and dangerous course has been taken of referring the work in its form, and practical details at least, to its known and irreconcilable enemies; of submitting, to their advice, the time of its initiation and its progress, and even the choice of the means and instruments of its execution.

Of all errors in policy it is the most palpable, to commit the structure and management of difficult and delicate measures to those who avowedly dislike the principles on which they are founded; and who wish, not for their success, but their failure: nor is there in this respect any difference between Slave-holders elected into a Colonial Assembly, and Slaveholders sitting in a Council, or Court of Policy, under the authority of the Crown. It would not be more irrational to devise a plan for converting the Irish Catholics to the Protestant Church, and then submit its practical means and accomplishment to the deliberations of the College of Maynooth.

To this unhappy course of proceeding we owe the insurrection at Demerara, with all the dangerous discussions, controversies, remonstrances, and delays, which have been opposed to the execution of the Royal Instructions, not only there but in Berbice; in neither of which is the promised work, I believe, yet fairly begun.

It is due to Earl Bathurst to say, that His Lordship appears hitherto not to have been wanting in decision or firmness, in maintaining his ground, as far as the official correspondence goes, against the clamorous and pertinacious opposition he has met with from the local authorities in those Colonies, as well as from the Planters: but still nothing appears yet to be effected; nor will any thing, beyond ostensible and evasive compliance, ever be obtained, until Government changes its course, and ends where it should have begun,—by a peremptory Order in Council. The very voluminous correspondence with the Governors laid before Parliament in the last session too clearly justifies these views; and if my readers wish for full satisfaction on the subject, they may find it in an abstract of those papers which has just been presented to the public.\*

Frustration of all the hopes of the poor Slaves, and of their compassionate fellow-subjects, will not be the only ill effect of this unfortunate course of proceeding, if it is not speedily reversed. Terrible mischiefs I doubt not will ensue; and the blame of them will

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\* See a pamphlet published by Hatchard and Son, entitled, "The Slave Colonies of Great Britain; or a Picture of Negro Slavery drawn by the Colonists themselves."

as usual be laid on the Friends of Reformation, not on its true authors,—those who stoop to solicit when they ought to ordain; or those who resist the proposed measures in the first instance, and spoil them in the second.

I cannot wholly exempt from these strictures even the particular case of Trinidad, where alone there has been any direct and peremptory exercise of royal legislation; for though there is much practically good, and more that was well intended, in the Order of Council for that island, there is much also that is very objectionable; and the executive means are bad. An adequate discussion of that subject would be far too long for my present purpose; and it might be unjust to His Majesty's Government, and especially to the able and respectable statesman who presides over the Colonial Department, to give my views of it in a partial and cursory way. It is necessary however that I should protest on my own behalf, and that of my fellow-labourers in the cause of the Slaves, against the notion insidiously propagated, that the Order is *our* work, or framed to *our* satisfaction. Whoever may be responsible for it, we are not. For my own part, I never saw it, or knew any thing of its provisions, till after it was printed by Parliament.

Had my advice been asked, I should have held, as I have ever done, that men who, as Slave-masters, have their prejudices, their habits, and their supposed self-interests, and an *esprit de corps* besides, all opposed to the success of such experiments, are not fit to be trusted with their execution; and would have added, that the masters of domestic Slaves are not less unfit to be so trusted than the owners of plantations. I would have added, and if necessary proved, that by the needless permission of domestic Slavery the predial is much embittered, and rendered more difficult to reform: for that men lose their sensibility more by the administration of a harsh servile discipline in proportion as they are more personally and immediately engaged in it; and that they unavoidably are so engaged more in the family than in the field. I might have further remarked, that a man who has been long in the personal government of such domestics as enslaved Negroes are usually found to be, and in the numbers that commonly belong to a West Indian household, must have an excellent temper, and great self-command, if he does not sometimes fall into those very excesses which it is the object of the Order to restrain; and that a magistrate or protecting officer is not very likely to do his duty when conscious that the delinquent he ought to punish might recriminate on himself.

I might perhaps have given, if consulted, still wider views of this subject, and told our Ministers that they ought not only to discourage but wholly to terminate domestic Slavery; because it cannot be alleged to be rendered necessary by the climate, and because its abolition, besides being productive of various other advantages on which I will not now enter, would be the most effectual means of increasing the number of the free in proportion to the Slaves, and thereby providing internal means of defence. But most especially

should I have recommended that at least the servants and agents of Government should be exempted from that fatal domestic contagion which spoils their feelings, and disposes them to favour or connive at the abuses they ought to restrain; and such, if I am not misinformed, was the Spanish policy in the protection both of Indians and Slaves.

In Trinidad, however, the right course of proceeding, though not by the best measures, has at length been pursued; and I hope that in the other Colonies subject to His Majesty's legislative power it will not be longer delayed. As a man who has laboured much, and not unsuccessfully, to prevent the Constitutions, preposterously called English, established in the old Slave Colonies being imparted to the new, I am bound to say that little or no good has been done by adopting that policy, if the Crown, instead of exercising its authority in making laws for the protection of the Slaves, is to delegate that duty to Slave-masters resident on the spot. The former sovereigns of those Colonies, whether Spanish, French, or Dutch, never called on their governors, councils, or courts to deliberate in such cases, but only to obey.

My main business, however, is with that larger class of Sugar Colonies which Parliament only can controul; and these have refused any compliance with its resolutions. Most of them have even boldly set its authority at defiance; and yet Parliament, in respect of them, has hitherto been silent and supine.

I correct myself. Much, very much has been done, but all in the way of aid, encouragement and bounty, instead of coercion, to these refractory Colonists;—bounty, at the expense of our purses and our commerce, as well as of our feelings and our honour: aid and encouragement, by the renunciation of almost every principle and rule on which the value of our Colonies to the Parent State has hitherto been thought to depend. Our Navigation Laws have been abrogated for their benefit; except only in those points in which it was more for their advantage to retain them. They may now reject your manufactures, and take all their supplies from every rival state; and it depends on their own choice whether they will send their sugar to your markets; while you are still compelled by protecting duties, as they are called, amounting to a prohibition of foreign sugar, to buy from them alone. Even the long-supposed palladium of your navy has been relinquished for the benefit of these contumacious votaries of the cart-whip. The carrying-trade of your Colonies is no longer your own, but has been thrown open to every foreign and rival prow.

I stop not to inquire whether the plausible arguments on which this grand revolution in our maritime policy has been defended are not only specious but sound. They have certainly an air of liberality; and I was taught long since by one whose judgment, as well as his virtues, I held in very high estimation, my much-lamented friend Mr. Percival, to regard Mr. Huskisson as one of the most enlightened and judicious of our statesmen. Therefore, although I



have been heretofore a feeble advocate for those principles which the wisdom of our ancestors handed down to us, and under an adherence to which, during two centuries, our naval greatness rose, perhaps I was mistaken. If so, I need not be ashamed to read my recantation; for it will be in a crowd of splendid converts, who have now renounced the same erroneous faith.

Let me not be understood, then, as condemning in the abstract these new principles, or the applying them, if impartially done, to our Colonial trade and navigation. But as the change was one which our sugar planters had long and ardently solicited, and as one of its prominent immediate objects was avowed to be *their* accommodation and advantage, it was certainly in that respect very ill-timed, and tended to encourage and confirm their contumacy.

Had this been all, we might have regarded it only as an unfortunate coincidence. But unhappily this great commercial and maritime revolution had some awkward modifications, some striking departures from its own principles, and exceptions to its own rules; and upon every one of these, West Indian interests, and West Indian views, were so legibly written, that if the West Indian Committee had sat in council with the Board of Trade, and guided its resolutions, the new code could not have been better framed for the gratification of our planters.

The general principle is the favourite maxim of political economists, that trade should be perfectly free. The Colonial monopoly therefore ought clearly to have been abolished on both sides; but it was relaxed only where it was restrictive on the Planter; and continued only where it made for his advantage. He may now sell his sugar where and to whom he pleases; but the English consumers are still bound as before to buy it. Foreigners may bring us what they please, except any thing that West India planters have to sell. As to protective duties, they should no longer have a place in our Custom-house vocabularies: the very name is heretical; by the new faith; for "commerce can be protected only by itself." Aye, but our planters were here a little sceptical; and thought that 36s. per cwt. additional duty on sugar, and 84s. additional duty on coffee, of foreign growth, would be better than theoretical security against rivalry in the British markets; and plain men perhaps will suspect that they were right; for they were humoured in this whim; and we are now paying on an average from 42s. to 45s. per cwt. for sugar which a year or two ago we bought at an average of from 27s. to 30s.

The case of our East Indian possessions was a little stronger. We and our fellow-subjects there had a mutual and irresistible claim to be placed within the pale of this new-found liberality. The only plausible pretext before for favouring the Slave Colonies of the West, at the expense of our Eastern Empire, by imposing on the Sugar of the latter a duty which, when added to the high expense of the carriage, amounted to a prohibition, was, that we had a monopoly of the supply and navigation of the former, which was

burthensome on the West India planter, and demanded therefore in justice a reciprocal privilege to him. The Assemblies themselves had expressly rested their case on this ground; and had repeatedly admitted that when the restrictions on their trade should be taken off, they would no longer have a claim to any exclusive privilege in our markets. To remove the one therefore, and retain the other, was to favour them beyond the utmost range of their own former expectations and demands.

Whilst the new principles applied to our East Indian trade in a commercial and economical view, with peculiar force, every consideration of justice and policy entitled our fellow-subjects in the East at this period to all the favour we could justly accord to them. They had become important customers to our manufacturers, who had begun to supplant their own cotton weavers at the foot of their own looms in Bengal; and they wanted only a return article like sugar to enlarge their commercial intercourse with us to an almost boundless extent, and in a way the most advantageous that can be imagined, not only to our national wealth and maritime strength, but to the security of our Indian Empire. But all these potent considerations fell before West Indian influence; and from the benefit of the new principles, as well as the old, our East Indian trade was excluded.

There was indeed one exception. The sugar of the Isle of France was before subjected to the same duties with that produced within the dominions of the East India Company; but it is now privileged like that of our West India Colonies; though for what reason it is thus preferred to the produce of Bengal, except that it is raised by the forced labour of Slaves, it is hard to imagine. This, it may be said, is no benefit to the West India planters. No; but it is a great one to that most influential part of their body in this country, the consignees of tropical produce; and besides, it tends to increase the interest of Slave-holders in general among us; and to consolidate their union as a body for the maintenance of the common system. Of these advantages they well know the value. We should not otherwise have been cursed, not only through their acquiescence, but by their concurrence, and by their secret intrigues, with the acquisition of new Sugar Colonies on the continent of South America; by which, though our islands were generally prejudiced as agriculturists, their political weight as Slave-holders has been much and fatally increased.

It may seem but a trivial item in this large account, when I add to it the different treatment of two Joint-Stock Companies, who applied coterminously in the last session of Parliament for legislative aid to supply their want of charters, and set their plans in motion; but small features sometimes mark more strongly than large ones the character of a partial system. The object of one of these projects was to obtain loans on sugar estates, by means of a joint stock, upon securities which individual prudence had been too well taught to decline. The object of the other was to promote also

by a joint stock, and the co-operation of numbers, the raising and importation of sugar, the produce of free labour. It had an eye to the East, but not to the East alone. Some parts even of the West Indies might have been the theatres of an experiment interesting to every friend of humanity and justice. The former project was among the multitude of Joint-Stock Companies (the madness of the day), one of the most objectionable on the score of imposition on the public. It was manifest to every thinking man of ordinary information, that the sole purpose of the projectors was to pass upon the credulous subscribers securities which those who knew best their nature were unwilling to take or to hold. The plan was also one of sure and great prejudice to the Slaves; not only by subjecting them to fall into the wholesale management of perpetually non-resident owners, but because the superoneration of the estate they belong to naturally enhances their forced labour, and diminishes the means of their support; nor did these objections escape the notice of their friends, but were forcibly submitted to Parliament and the public.

But between the two plans there was this important difference; the one was advantageous to Slave-holders, and supported by their powerful influence at the Board of Trade and in Parliament; but the other had no such recommendation or support. The West India Company in consequence was patronized by Ministers, and its bill passed into a law; though the only one of the Joint-Stock Company bills, I believe, that had that good fortune, after the Lord Chancellor entitled himself to the gratitude of the country by exposing their mischievous effects. The Free Sugar Company, on the contrary, finding that their bill, though not really objectionable on the general grounds, would be encountered by insuperable opposition in the Upper House, was obliged to abandon it after it had made its way through the Commons\*.

I will point out only one more instance of this partiality. It is one which cannot be stated adequately in few words; but it was the consummation of a system of measures portentous of infinite mischief to our country, as well as a case in which not only the principle of giving freedom to trade and navigation, but with it other principles of high political importance, have been sacrificed by the same boundless complaisance to the prejudices, and the supposed particular interests, of our West India Colonies.

Here some retrospective remarks are necessary. Our treatment of *Haiti* from the moment of its first Revolution, but more especially

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\* It is right to admit that the West India party in the House of Commons did not openly oppose this bill; but I doubt not, the reason was, that their leaders well knew it would be thrown out if carried to the Upper House. I certainly cannot commend the conduct of its promoters in not putting that expectation to the proof: but they thought it right, I understand, to save useless expense, having official information that the bill could not possibly pass; and that the exception to the general rule, made in favour of the rival Company, was the result only of a promise given by His Majesty's Ministers, before that rule was adopted.

from the time of its actual, to the momentous recent period of its recognised independence, has been one continued surrender of national interests to the narrow views and potent influence of the Colonial Party. We paralysed our belligerent arm in Europe, when the fate of the civilized world apparently depended on its energies, for the sake of engaging in the *bellum servile* between the French Planters of St. Domingo and their Slaves. At least forty thousand, as I believe, of our brave soldiers and seamen, and as much public money as constituted, by the terms it was borrowed upon, perhaps eighty millions of debt, charged by heavy taxation on the purses of the British People, were the price we paid in that war alone for the sake of our Sugar Colonies, in the attempt to restore the cart-whip government, lest it should be subverted also in our own islands, though disappointment, and disgrace, and calamity were the only fruits of that attempt.

The triumphs of the heroic TOUSSAINT happily drove us at length from that dreadful field; and his magnanimity gave us the olive-branch, and commercial benefits along with it, which but for our deference to Colonial prejudices might have been much greater than they were. Federal connexions with the island were not perhaps then in our choice, for he was a faithful subject of France. But the next war with Buonaparte made us from necessity associates in arms with Toussaint's brave successors; and we found them in possession of a real and asserted independence. Then was the time, when the just exasperation of the brave Haytians against that detestable tyrant was at the highest, and when we owed to France nothing but resolute defiance; then was the time, when a most happy opportunity offered to make the new people our friends, our allies, and our commercial tributaries for ever. We had but to recognise an independence which it was plain to every thinking man could never be subverted, and that "citadel of the Antilles" never again would have fallen into rival or hostile hands. All its agricultural and commercial, all its political and belligerent, faculties, would have been permanently ours. The opportunity was not unnoticed. Even the labours of this feeble pen plainly, however inadequately, pointed out its value\*. But it was neglected, as I foresaw it would; and the effects that I foretold have followed. The pestilent vapours of Creolian prejudice obscured the true interests of our country, or the fatal influence of the Colonists betrayed them.

The gross impolicy of the neglect was no short-lived error; for the opportunity continued open to us for ten or eleven years, from the time of the final expulsion of the French under Rochambeau, till our pacification with France in 1814. No rational doubt could be entertained during that long period of the ability or the determination of the Haytians to maintain their independency. Under our protection at least, their ability was as certain as their will. It was

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\* In a pamphlet called "The Opportunity," published in 1804, as well as other publications.

as manifest also then as now, to all but Creolian eyes, that Negroes were capable of sustaining, by peaceable and loyal conduct, the social edifice which their intrepidity and love of freedom had erected. Rival leaders indeed had successively started up, and by military conspiracies two of them had perished, like the early Roman Emperors by mutinies of the prætorian bands; but like the Roman populace of that era, the black people at large had always submitted peaceably and loyally to their existing Governments. Wearied, like that unfortunate people, by the bloody and ferocious scenes through which they had previously passed, they loved their new-found repose; but the remembrance of the driving-whip was a band of union against France, stronger than the glory of the Roman name against Barbarian conquerors. The unanimous sentiment was liberty and independency, or death. For a while the question between Monarchical and Republican Government, or rather between Christophe and Petion, produced a territorial division, and an interior war; but they had the wisdom soon to sheathe the sword; and the fidelity of the people at large to their respective Governments stood the new and severe test of instigation by border enemies within the island. Before, as well as since their re-union under Boyer, it was found in vain to excite any disaffection among them that could favour in the slightest degree their restitution, either as slaves or subjects, to the abhorred dominion of France.

Their successive and their divided chiefs also manifested, in regard to exterior relations, one only and one anxious wish; and that was to cultivate the amity and obtain the alliance of England. They courted us almost to servility; they endured many insults from the Slave-masters of our islands with exemplary patience; they gave us, without any equivalent, commercial privileges of the most decisive kind, exclusive of the Americans and all other neutral nations; and they so carefully avoided every occasion of offence to their contemptuous neighbours of Jamaica, that not even a complaint, true or false, has been heard of, to my knowledge at least, from that jealous and hostile quarter. Our ships of war were received in their ports with every honour the Government could possibly pay; and our officers (Sir Home Popham among others) were astonished at the elegance and splendour with which they were entertained on shore.

But the necessary limits of this Address will not allow me to go further into detail. If it pleases God long to spare my life, and continue my powers of labour, you shall have, in a History of Hayti, sustained by authentic documents, facts of this kind, which will show, to your astonishment perhaps, how worthy this people were of our confidence and friendship. But all that we condescended to do in return was to connive at our merchants buying their coffee, and selling our manufactures in their ports; abstaining from all diplomatic or other public intercourse as cautiously as if Buonaparte had been our friend, or an enemy whom we were afraid to exasperate. Our whole conduct proclaimed to their intelligent leaders, in a style

not to be mistaken, that maritime and commercial England—England, the only power able and entitled by her hostile relations with France to countenance their independence—was irreconcilably averse to it; and they well knew that it was from motives which made us not less averse to their personal freedom.

Does any one of my readers doubt that our servility to West Indian prejudices and West Indian influence dictated such conduct? Then let him suppose for a moment that this important island had been peopled, not with Blacks and Mulattoes, but with Whites, who had in like manner thrown off the yoke of France; or that its Planters had succeeded in putting down the insurgent Slaves, and afterwards proclaimed their independence, and offered us their trade as the price of our recognising and protecting it; and then ask himself whether he thinks our rulers would have acted as they did.

I will not stop here to inquire whether regard to the safety of our Sugar Colonies, and the maintenance of their interior system, might excuse or justify the policy in question. I have heretofore demonstrated the contrary; and shown that, assuming, what the event has since proved, the invincible stability of Haytian freedom, the safety of our own islands, of Jamaica at least, not only admitted, but demanded an opposite course, though their foolish antipathy and contempt towards the African race strongly and too successfully opposed it\*. But at present my object is to show the sacrifices we have actually made, whether wisely or unwisely, to the wishes or the interests of our Sugar Colonists; and it is an undeniable article in the account, that, for their sakes, we have thrown away the exclusive commerce, the amity, and alliance of the Haytian Republic.

We have done still worse: we have at length forced back this truly formidable West Indian power into the arms of France; and this, by persevering in the same obsequious course towards our Sugar Planters, even since they have refused to indulge us with giving a Sabbath to their Slaves, and exempting their females from the whip.

BOYER, menaced with the horrors of a new invasion, though fearless of its ultimate event, has, since our peace with France, persisted in courting our friendship. No stronger instance of it can be desired, than that while the flags of all maritime nations were eagerly frequenting his ports, bringing an overflow of the merchandize of Europe and North America, and taking his produce in return, he exacted from all other foreigners duties of 12 per cent *ad valorem*, and only 5 per cent from the merchants and ships of Great Britain. Nor did he withdraw this important privilege till the month of April last, notwithstanding the repulsive coldness and contempt with which we had received it, and the continued provocations he met with from Jamaica.

We were no longer indeed at liberty, without a shadow of international wrong, to enter into a treaty of alliance with this new power,

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\* See the work last referred to.

while yet unrecognised by the former sovereign, with whom we were now at peace. That golden opportunity had been lost beyond recall; yet there was a middle line of conduct, such as we have adopted towards the new South American States, and to which France could not with reason, or without gross inconsistency, have objected. We might have given a national sanction and safeguard to the existing commerce, and secured the continuance of its privilege, by appointing resident consuls, and even by sending envoys to the court of Port-au-Prince, as we have done to Buenos Ayres, to Mexico, and Columbia. We might have thus acted, I may add, with greater reason and more apparent justice, towards Hayti, than towards any of the revolted colonies of Spain; because the independency of the Haytian people had been longer, and more firmly and unequivocally established in point of fact, than that of any of their continental neighbours; and no advantage could, in their case, have been alleged to have been taken of the weak and distracted situation of the Parent State. On the contrary, France during several years of peace and internal tranquillity, and when powerful enough to cast her shield over the impotent monarchy of Spain, and to occupy its territories with her armies, had practically acquiesced in the independency of Hayti, as a loss of sovereignty not to be retrieved. What is still stronger, she had herself virtually recognised its government, by repeatedly attempting to treat with it; and latterly it was well known, that the recognition of its independency was only a question of terms: whereas Spain, even in the extremity of her weakness, has not yet condescended to treat with her revolted subjects; and the royal standard is still supported among them by faithful though feeble adherents. If a further argument *à fortiori* were wanted, we were under no self-defensive necessity to secure the amity, or guard against the future enmity of the South American States; whereas a free Negro state, in the centre of the Antilles, unless secured as a friend, was obviously likely to prove to us a most formidable and dangerous enemy. Should France recover her sovereignty there, over a nation of free and military Negroes, or what perhaps was still worse, if she should gain them as independent allies and confederates, it was manifest that our West Indian possessions must hereafter lie at her mercy. But powerful and urgent as these national considerations were (immense commercial advantages on the one side, fearful public dangers on the other), colonial influence still prevailed.

The finishing stroke to our infatuated policy was that last exception, that last inconsistency, in our new system of trade and navigation, which I proposed to notice. In laying open our colonial trade to all nations we made a special exception in the case of Hayti, highly offensive and injurious to that country, forbidding under extreme penalties all intercourse whatever between it and Jamaica. By the statute 6th Geo. IV. cap. 114, sec. 48, it is provided, first, that no British merchant ship shall sail from any place in Jamaica to any place in St. Domingo, or *vice versa*, under penalty of *for-*

*feiture of ship and cargo.* Secondly, that no *foreign ship* which shall have come from, or in the course of her voyage have touched at, any place in St. Domingo, shall come into any port or harbour in Jamaica, *under the like penalties.* Thirdly, that if any person shall be landed in Jamaica from on board any ship which shall have come from or touched at St. Domingo (*without restriction to the same voyage even*), the ship and cargo shall be forfeited.

It can be no sufficient excuse to say that an Act or Acts to a like effect had existed before that period. True it is, that the Assembly of Jamaica, having gratified its indignant spite against Negro freedom, by an Act restraining all such intercourse with Hayti, as far as its own power of interior regulation extended, its agents soon found Government complaisant enough to lend its aid, in order to extend the penalties and right of seizure, to ships that might not be found, or cases that might not arise, within the colonial jurisdiction. A *July Bill* for that purpose was more than once pushed, without noise or notice, through Parliament; and so effectually escaped observation, that though my attention has been pretty much given to such subjects, I must confess my ignorance of any such measure having been adopted, till the recent revolutions in our maritime and colonial code led me to look back with some particularity on the state of the former law.

But when Government so materially altered its system, the measure, though not in a separate consideration new, had in its connexion with those important changes, all the effect of an injurious and offensive innovation. A gentleman who at his country residence should choose to live retired, and receive no guest but his own family, would give no just offence by omitting to invite his nearest neighbour, who had made to him the most courteous advances; but should he reverse his plan of life, and invite all his neighbours, with the exception of that particular person, the case would be completely altered, and would reasonably be considered as a disparagement or affront; and such has been our conduct towards Hayti. While all foreign bottoms were systematically excluded from our Colonial ports, with a few particular exceptions only, in the Free Port Acts, founded on regard to the convenience or necessities of our West India Islands, as in the supply of North American flour and lumber (articles not furnished by the Haytian people), or for the sake of favouring our valuable commerce with Spanish America, while contraband by its own laws, the interdiction of trade between Jamaica and Hayti placed the latter in a situation not materially different from that of our other foreign neighbours, whether in America or Europe: but when we reversed our ancient maxims, and threw open the doors of our Colonies, which we had before so jealously barred, to every state and every flag but one, the re-enacting of the former interdict against that particular country alone, gave it a new character, and made it a more invidious distinction.

The effect also of such sweeping and extreme penalties, under



the new circumstances of the case, was unjustly to subject the commerce of the Haytian Republic, and of all the nations that trade with them, to new and multiplied disadvantages and dangers, the consequences of which it is easy to foresee, will be highly mischievous, and productive of disputes, not only with Hayti, but, perhaps, with other powers.

To such of my readers as know any thing of West Indian navigation and commerce, this will be obvious enough; especially when they recollect that all the ports in the Mexican Gulf, and of the late Spanish continent to windward of it, as well as those of Jamaica, are now open to every friendly flag. To those who are uninformed on such subjects, it may be proper to remark that both Hayti and Jamaica lie directly across, or very near, the track of ships trading between North America or Europe and a great part of the new states of South America north of Brazil: and that from the effects of the trade-winds this proscription of Hayti is in such respects, though limited in form to its intercourse with Jamaica, not less restrictive or inconvenient in practice than if it were extended to all our West India Colonies. It is with that British island only that the Haytians could easily or profitably trade; and there only that foreigners trading with them would often be desirous or able to touch, in their outward or homeward voyage.

In consequence of these sweeping prohibitions, Hayti will be debarred from a large part of that commerce which would otherwise be opened to her, through her central and advantageous position, by the revolutions in Mexico and South America at large, as well as by our own change of system; and also from those benefits to which she is justly entitled by that commercial habit of visiting the West Indies in what is called a "trading voyage"; namely, a voyage destined not to a particular port or island only, but to a market, where it can best be found, or where the desired returns can most advantageously be obtained. So important is this practice deemed by the merchants of the United States in particular, that they were disposed to go to war with us for obstructing it in their trade with the Colonies of our enemies, after we had conceded the point of permitting a trade directly with them to and from that neutral country. But now, every North American or European ship bound to the West Indies or South America, on a trading voyage, must make an exception, in her papers, of Hayti or Jamaica, or both; and if Hayti be not excepted, the exception of Jamaica alone will not only be a renunciation of the new privileges that we have opened to them in that our most important island, but will leave them exposed to great hazard of being seized on suspicion, if obliged by bad weather, currents, or other causes to approach near to that island in going to or returning from any market on the South American continent. In this respect the Spanish-American revolutions, and our own more recent commercial revolution, will make the former restrictions operate much more severely and unfairly than they before did against the interests of the Haytian people. It should never

be forgotten in framing such prohibitions, that their indirect and undesigned, are not less prejudicial to the interdicted country, than their direct and intended effects. A new commercial crime constitutes of course a new ground of suspicion or false imputation, and a new ground therefore of maritime seizure and prosecution, with all the vexatious consequences that are sure to attend them in a distant part of the world; consequences peculiarly formidable when the courts that have to decide on them in the first instance are strongly disposed to favour the seizure. A prosecution in Jamaica, for trading with Hayti, is certainly not one in which an injured claimant would have the best prospects of just redress.

When a country is infected with the plague, or when a hostile port is under blockade, the necessity of the case which compels us to impose such restrictions on the commerce of friendly powers, furnishes not only an excuse, but a salvo for their dignity. But here we have the same and greater restrictions in time of peace; and on a new principle, never acted on by any other civilized power, a principle also as offensive in itself, as the practice founded upon it; for what does it plainly imply but that the Haytian Government is disposed to excite insurrections in Jamaica, though no part of its conduct, during above twenty years of actual independence, has furnished the slightest pretext for the suspicion? Where else can lie the justification of condemning both ship and cargo, not only for having touched at infected Hayti *before*, but even *after* touching at Jamaica? In this it exceeds the restrictions of the quarantine laws; and the utmost severity of the law of war in regard to blockaded ports.

It would have been enough for my present purpose that the Government has in fact from complaisance to our Slave-owners departed from its own new and favourite commercial system, by impairing without necessity the general freedom of trade. But my last remarks show that there is, in the tone and temper of the proceedings towards Hayti, enough to mark still more clearly a subserviency to all the bitterness of West Indian prejudices, at the expense not only of trade, but perhaps also of our peace with the Haytian people.

*Suppose President Boyer and his Council should choose to retaliate!* It seems due to their own independency and dignity to do so; and it would be impossible for us decently to complain if they did. We should then soon find to our cost the importance of these remarks. Not a ship from Jamaica could beat through the windward passage, without exposing herself to a reasonable suspicion of meaning to violate the counter prohibition, so as to warrant perhaps her being brought into the Cape, or some other Haytian port, for examination or trial.

I repeat that such treatment of a country which was anxiously courting our friendship, and with which France was known to be then negotiating on the basis of acknowledging its independency, was too egregious a blunder in policy to have had its origin in any thing but the enormous influence of the West Indian party. It too

well accounts for, and justifies the conduct of President Boyer, in at last indignantly withdrawing from us the favour and privileges we had so ill requited, and casting himself into the arms of France. I admit however that the Haytian people had ground enough, without this last affront, for despairing that creolized England would ever recognise their independence, or cease to be the secret enemy of their freedom; still more that she would ever be induced to enter into any connexion that might be a support to them, in the event of a new invasion, or tend to avert that calamity.

Some writers have been unreasonable enough to condemn the President for agreeing to pay 150 millions of livres (six millions sterling) to France, for the relinquishment of an empty title. But his conduct was made by our bad policy natural and right. Beyond doubt he would gladly have avoided so heavy an incumbrance on his finances; but we had taught him that there was no other way to give to the republic, in its foreign relations, the benefit of its independency, or obtain for it decent respect, even from the country it had most highly favoured. We had taught him also to apprehend, that in the event of a new invasion by France, he would be treated by the only maritime power that durst despise her resentment, and consequently by all the rest, not as a legitimate belligerent, with whom neutrals might lawfully trade, but as an insurgent and a rebel. He did well and wisely therefore, in my opinion, to prevent the evils of such a contest by as large a pecuniary sacrifice as the country could afford.

He has been blamed also for giving to France such commercial privileges as will exclude in its consequences the ships and the merchandize of other countries. This perhaps was a necessary part of the price; but perhaps also, it was some gratification to reflect, that ungrateful and contemptuous England had rejected the same boon when gratuitously offered, and would lose what France would gain by it. If letters from Port-au-Prince inserted in the newspapers may be trusted, Anti-British feelings have already appeared from measures beyond the terms of the Treaty. "Not only," it is said, "is the duty to be increased on English goods imported, but the valuation of them, by which the amount of the duty is estimated, is capriciously *doubled*. With the French merchants, a contrary course is pursued, and the duty on goods exported has been lowered 50 per cent in their favour, while that paid by the English remains unaltered." It is added, "British goods if imported at all must be imported in French vessels, which will give them a monopoly of the carrying-trade with the island."

We have performed then that seeming miracle, the possibility of which I vainly foretold twenty years ago, as a consequence of our infatuated policy. We have made France popular in Hayti! in betrayed, butchered, massacred, blood-bounded Hayti! Nor will the matter end here. Haytian ambassadors are already arrived at the French Court, and we shall soon probably hear of a perpetual league offensive and defensive, far more formidable to the British

West Indies in future wars, than the family compact ever was to Europe. The "citadel of the Antilles" might have been the bulwark of our Islands; but now it will be a place of arms, and an enormous ever-teeming barrack for their enemies. Woe to the British regiments when next we draw the sword! Twice ten thousand inglorious graves await them in Jamaica.

Mean time let us place to the account of our Slave Colonies the loss of a commerce of vast importance to our merchants, our manufacturers, and our ship-owners, and capable of an indefinite increase. For those Colonies, and by their baneful influence, we sunk many millions to reclaim the Haytians into slavery; for them and their gratification, we have cast away the compensation which the folly and crimes of Buonaparte would have given us. France, not England, will have the indemnities for the past. England, not France, will have the dangers and mischiefs of the future. While we, my countrymen, are paying the interest of a debt probably amounting to eighty millions or more, contracted for the St. Domingo war, the French Proprietors, whose crimes and insanity we abetted, are receiving by our gift many millions of livres per annum. For the sake of Slavery, we sinned and bled and squandered! And for the sake of Slavery, we have rejected that reparation which fortune, in spite of our folly, had placed within our grasp.

These, however, are but a part of those sacrifices which Colonial influence has cost us. Scarcely a year passes in which some West India job is not imposed on Parliament at the expense of the British people; and all for the hopeless purpose of perpetuating Slavery, by sustaining a system, the inherent weakness and wastefulness of which makes it incapable of self-support. It is not enough that you pay an annual subsidy to your Sugar Colonies of a million and a half per annum, in bounties and drawbacks, and in prices which their monopoly enables them to exact; and at least as much more for their military protection, even in this time of profound peace; but whenever their alleged necessities require it, your own healthful faculties must be laid under contribution, to nourish and relieve their morbid and rickety frames, till the new paroxysm is over.

Sometimes you have had to lend them millions at five per cent, which you borrowed and funded at more than six; at other times, they have laid violent hands even upon your agriculture and your manufactures, prohibiting the use of barley in your distilleries, that their sugar might be used in its stead; and the loud remonstrances of your landholders and farmers were opposed to them in vain. Now they have made successfully a still further inroad on your corn-fields. Rum is to be re-distilled into British spirits, that your wheat and oats, as well as barley, may make room for their slave-raised produce. Before even the late grand revolution, your export of flour and oats to them, formerly of no small amount, was effectually precluded; and the same benefit was taken from your North American Colonies, by opening their ports to the cheaper and nearer produce of the United States.

But was not all this, some of my good-natured readers may be here ready to ask, the result of a compassionate regard for the distresses to which the Sugar Colonies have been occasionally subjected by temporary causes, such as might fairly entitle them to relief from the Parent State? This has certainly been the usual pretext: and I am far from meaning to deny that if the pecuniary embarrassments or hopeless insolvency of a large proportion of the planters, constitutes a case entitling them and their brethren to relief at the expense of the empire at large, their claim to it has been fairly made out. I admit, nay I am ready to maintain and prove, that such a case, now and at all times, exists in every one of our West India islands. But I am at a loss to conceive on what ground, except the preponderating weight of their political influence, our sugar planters are entitled, more than any other adventurers in hazardous and losing speculations, to cast the burthen of their distress or ruin on the shoulders of their fellow-subjects in Europe. The adventurers in a state lottery, the jobbers on the Stock Exchange, nay the subscribers to the joint-stock companies of the day, do not play a more desperate game than theirs; and yet what would be said if such speculators, when distressed by the natural consequences of their own imprudence, should petition Parliament for relief at the public expense? Our more sober adventurers, in commercial and manufacturing undertakings, and our agriculturists also, sometimes are plunged into distress, from causes affecting not only individuals, but large classes of people, in a very compassionate way; yet we do not lay the nation at large under contribution to save their credit, or repair their shattered fortunes. But the much-favoured Slave-holders of the West Indies too successfully maintain, that while the benefit of prosperous adventures is to be their own, their losses in adverse times are to be borne or shared by you. Whenever their sugar is not dear enough in your markets to produce, to the more fortunate and influential of their planters, an adequate profit (which, from the nature of their ruinous system, never was or can be long made by the body at large), they come with loud lamentations to the doors of the Privy Council and of Parliament; they add their combined private solicitations and intrigues; and some costly boon at the expense of the country at large, and sometimes too at the expense of the most important and favourite principles, is sure to be accorded to them. They are at the same time sturdy beggars; for their petitions rarely fail to be garnished with accusation and abuse; especially of those who deprived them of the Slave-trade, and who now would persuade them to improve the condition of their Slaves. They rail even at the  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent duty; though it was the original price of their lands, in other respects gratuitously granted by the Crown, in the islands in which that duty prevails. They rail at our own import duty on their produce; most absurdly assuming that it is paid by themselves, and not by the British consumers. They find fault in short with every thing, except their own wretched interior system, the true source of all

their evils. It is in vain pointed out to them that the exhaustion of their lands is the natural effect of the substitution of human labour for that of cattle, and the consequent want of manure; that the expenses of their culture are enormously enhanced by the same cause, and by the want of such machinery and implements as all other farmers employ; more especially as their multitudinous labourers are bought at high prices, and therefore large interest on the perishable capital so invested must be deducted from the gross returns. If the pretence were true, (would to God it in any degree were so!) that these poor labourers are fairly paid or sustained, the price given for them would manifestly be a dead loss, in comparison with free labour, from the moment of the purchase. We should laugh at the complaints of a farmer, that he could not obtain adequate returns, even from the best lands, raising the richest produce, if, rejecting ploughs and harrows and wains, he employed a hundred labourers on as many acres, maintaining them and their families to boot, and had paid besides for removing them from a distant country at the rate of eighty or a hundred pounds per man. It would not be necessary to his ruin that he had, like many of the sugar planters, bought the land itself at a high price, such as some agricultural speculation of a tempting kind (hop-planting for instance) might have raised it to.

From whatever cause, it is a clear and uncontested truth, that of a vast majority of those who engage in sugar planting ruin is soon or late the ordinary lot. I have shown it to demonstration in a work already before the public, and am not aware that the proposition has ever been denied; but as it is a fact of great importance, and your feelings are perpetually assailed on the score of West India distresses, as if they were occasional and accidental, not permanent and inherent evils, I will subjoin a few of the many testimonies, in illustration of the ordinary case, that have been furnished by the Colonists themselves\*.

\* In one of them, we are told, that in the course of twenty years, which reaches back to 1772, "*one hundred and seventy-seven estates in Jamaica had been sold for payment of debts, and ninety-two more were in the hands of creditors, and that executions had been 'lodged in the Marshal's office for £22,563,786 sterling\*.'*" In another, that "*every British merchant who holds securities on Jamaica estates is filing bills to foreclose; although when he has obtained a Decree he hesitates to enforce it, because he must himself become proprietor of the plantation; of which, from fatal experience, he knows the consequences:*" that "*all kind of credit is at an end:*" and after other most impressive traits of general ruin, that "*a faithful detail would have the appearance of a frightful caricature†.*"

In a third, that "*the distresses of the sugar planters have already reached an alarming extent, and are now increasing with accelerated rapidity; for the sugar estates lately thrown up, brought to sale, and now in the Court of Chancery, amount to about one-fourth of the whole number in the Colony:*" that "*the Assembly anti-*

\* Report of the Jamaica Assembly, Nov. 23, 1792.

† Report of the same Assembly, Nov. 23, 1804.

After such testimonials from the Assemblies of the Sugar Colonies, their agents, and zealous partisans, as I have here referred to, how can it be pretended that their recent distress is the effect of any extraordinary or temporary cause, or that it is a case which any assistance from the Mother Country, however liberal or lavish, can effectually cure? It is manifest that the motive of compassion which has been held out to a good-natured public, as an excuse for all the costly boons so unseasonably bestowed by Parliament, was, if not insincere, at least much misplaced. All attempts to relieve the distresses of the sugar planters by such means, while they persist in their present system, are not less hopeless and irrational than those misdirected charities which the Mendicity Society benevolently labours to restrain,—they aggravate the very evils which the heedless benefactors wish to palliate or remove.

But the lavish and ill-timed national favours bestowed on our Sugar Colonies may be ascribed perhaps to other and wiser motives. Though they teem perpetually with individual distress and ruin, they may be supposed to have a commercial, financial, or political value

*icipates very shortly the bankruptcy of a much larger part of the community, and in the course of a few years that of the whole class of sugar planters \*."*

In a fourth, that "*estate after estate has passed into the hands of mortgagees and creditors absent from the island, until there are whole districts, whole parishes, in which there is not a single resident proprietor of a sugar plantation†.*"

Lest it should be supposed that such long continued, or often reiterated ruin, was peculiar to Jamaica, take another brief extract of high authority from a Speech in Parliament of the late able and eminent Colonial Agent Mr. Marryatt: "*There are few estates in the West Indies that have not during the last twenty years (i. e. from 1793 to 1813) been sold or given up to creditors‡.*"

There never was a period at which the prices of sugar rose to and long maintained such very high prices, as from the time of the ruin of St. Domingo as a sugar colony in 1791, to the end of our succeeding war with France. It was the golden age of the British planters, as Reports of Parliamentary Committees, founded on their own evidence, have attested; and yet the reader will observe that Mr. Marryatt's twenty years comprise the whole of that very fortunate period.

But lest a doubt should remain, whether at still earlier times the case was better, I give two further extracts from the works of eminent West India proprietors, the late Mr. Bryan Edwards of Jamaica, and Mr. Tobin, formerly of Nevis and of Bristol; the former writing in 1792, and the latter in 1785, and both professing to give statistical views of the Sugar Colonies in reference to their general and ordinary situation. The former, speaking of the sugar planters in general, says, "*Many there are who have competencies that enable them to live with economy in this country; but the great mass are men of oppressed fortunes, consigned by debt to unremitting drudgery in the Colonies, with a hope which eternally mocks their grasp of happier days, and a release from their embarrassments§.*" And Mr. Tobin, in his cursory remarks on the Rev. Mr. Ramsay's Essay, says, "*For one planter that lives at his ease in Great Britain, there are fifty toiling under a load of debt in the Colonies.*"

\* Report of the same, Nov. 13, 1807.

† Petition of the same Assembly to the Prince Regent, Dec. 10, 1811.

‡ Debate on the East India Sugar Duties, 1815.

§ History of the West Indies, vol. ii. book 6, chap. 5.

to the Mother Country, such as are worth those sacrifices; and which might have led to them, independently of any bias from Colonial influence on the counsels of the State. Let me therefore entreat the reader's patience while I examine a little further what benefit or compensation redounds to this country, from all the sacrifices, and all the sins, by which West Indian Slavery is maintained.

And first, as to the boasted value and importance of the Sugar Colonies, in a view to the employment of our commercial industry and capital.—There are certainly very large pecuniary transactions and commercial dealings between the planters and the West India merchants of Great Britain. Most adversely to our cause, as well as to the general soundness and stability of British commercial credit, the two characters are in many cases united; and the capital invested in the purchase of sugar estates is for the most part lent or procured by our merchants. I do not deny therefore that our trading capital is largely so employed; but that it is profitably employed seems utterly irreconcilable with the facts already stated and proved.

Let any political economist explain to me, if he can, how it can be advantageous to a country to employ its commercial capital in a way that is always productive of loss and ruin to a vast majority of all the particular adventurers. National profit must be made up of the profits of individuals; and if the result to these, in a collective view, is not profit but loss, it is paradoxical and absurd to say that the nation is a gainer. It would be so, even if the Sugar Colonies cost us nothing for their government and protection. What then is the case, when it is considered that we maintain them at an enormous annual expense to the National Treasury, even in time of peace; and that in war, the average consumption of public money in their acquisition and defence, has amounted to many millions a year? The nation gains by a lottery, though a great majority of the adventurers lose by their tickets: but it is because in a lottery the public itself is a trader. It sells at a high price the chances that the adventurers buy, and gains what they collectively lose, deducting only the small charge of the commissioners and wheels. But the public is not the seller of West India estates; and instead of wheels and commissioners, it finds fleets and armies, and governors and judges, and jobs. Even when we have at an enormous expense conquered some new Sugar Colonies, what does the public gain by them? Not the estates; for they are retained by the foreign proprietors. It is a transfer only of the loss attending their future cultivation, from creditors and consignees in Bordeaux and Amsterdam, to creditors and consignees in London and Liverpool. British capital is soon largely employed, in the way of purchase or mortgage, to extricate foreign capital from the same profitless and ruinous investment; and the Treasury of England performs the same kind service for the Treasuries of Holland or France.

Here one difficulty usually presents itself to men who are happily inexperienced in colonial affairs. "How, the case standing thus,"



it may be asked, "are new adventurers always found to embark their own or borrowed capital in West Indian speculations?"

No better or shorter answer can be found than by referring again to that clear illustration, the closely parallel case of a state lottery. Why do the contractors find purchasers at twenty pounds, of tickets worth only ten?—Because there are most alluring high prizes in the wheel, though the far greater number of the tickets are sure to be blanks. Equalize the returns, by making each ticket a ten-pound prize, and no man of course would buy at a greater price than that. Add a small though certain profit, and the tickets would not easily be sold. The case is the same with sugar plantations. Such, from well-known causes, is the extreme inequality of their returns, that, though the average is at all times loss, there are particular exceptions of splendid gain, and numerous ones, of great and speedy, though commonly short-lived, success. Lottery tickets, besides, are not sold upon credit; but sugar estates almost always in great measure are. A man who can pay down a small or moderate part of the purchase money, may easily obtain time for the rest on the security of the estate itself.

These temptations operate on the merchant who advances the capital, as well as the planter who borrows it; for when the crops are fortunately large, the benefits of the consignments and factorage form an enormous bonus on the loan, which is added to interest at five per cent, and that compounded annually, to entice the mercantile lender, with the further benefit of commissions on the shipments outward for the supply of the Estate. He too, like the planter, can game more deeply upon a given capital in this, than almost any other line of business out of the Stock Exchange; for it is usually by his own acceptances of bills of exchange at very long sights, for instalments of two, three, four, and five years, or more, that the sugar estate is to be paid for; the seller always taking care to have the further security of a mortgage on the property sold. The main bait to the merchant commonly is, that if good crops are made, and come to good markets, their proceeds in his own hands may suffice, or nearly so, to meet his acceptances. Mean time, he is thus enabled to trade extensively on the foundation of his own paper; and then, the notoriety of his consignments and shipments, and his purchases from manufacturers, who supply the goods generally on long credit, may contribute greatly to the facility of extending his bill credit in this country; especially if he takes the common course of establishing a firm or firms in the West Indies, which, though composed of his own agents or secret partners, can draw and re-draw from that country, and thereby, even in the performance of his own engagements there, supply him with further means of bill accommodation in England\*.

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\* It may illustrate these general views to state that an eminent West India merchant, who failed some years ago for an immense amount, was liable a short time before his failure for bills, in circulation in this country, amounting together to more than a million sterling; for which the holders had no security but his own, and that of houses in the West Indies that had been set up by himself, in the names

Here then is, on both sides, the strong temptation of deep gaming, not only in the magnitude of the chances, but the facility of finding the stakes.

Further explanations might be given of the false estimates and delusive expectations in question. The prizes in a state lottery are not over rated. Every man knows the amount of what is actually gained by them, and cannot mistake a blank for a prize: but the success of the sugar planter is often a gross delusion. He comes home for a season, with the proceeds of a lucky crop in the hands of his consignees; and, either from self-indulgence or policy, exhibits the appearances of great prosperity. Like a comet from a distant region, he eclipses the regular planets of our system by his temporary blaze. He mixes with our fashionable aristocracy, and perhaps forms family alliances among them. He obtains the credit of having rapidly acquired a large fortune in the West Indies; and others are fatally excited to embark their capital or credit in the same imaginary gold-mine. When his consignees are overdrawn, and will advance no more, he returns to take for the rest of his life the lot described by Mr. Tobin,—“to toil under a load of debt, like forty-nine out of fifty of his brethren,” consigned, according to Mr. Edwards, “to unremitting drudgery in the Colonies, with a hope, which eternally mocks his grasp, of happier days and a release from his embarrassments.” But the comet is now out of sight; and the seducing effect of his short-lived splendour is not counteracted by the knowledge of the sad reverse. All who know the West Indies will recognise, in many cases within their own experience, the truth of these characteristics.

It may perhaps be objected that some West India merchants at least, have been very successful, and have long maintained their credit and apparent opulence, though largely connected with the planters, and themselves owners of sugar estates. True; and *their* example also is fatally influential in the same way: but point out to me one West India house of this description, raised within the last fifty years, and I will name in return six at least, who during the same period have either become bankrupts, or assigned their effects in trust for their unfortunate creditors. The successful few have been chiefly men who had long resided in the islands they trade with; and who have therefore been able to play the prudent game of selecting the best connexions, advancing money only to those

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of his clerks or dormant partners, with none but his own capital. He actually applied to Government on these grounds to sustain him by a loan of public money, because his stopping was likely to produce calamitous effects injurious to commercial credit. I knew these facts from the first authority; and knew previously so much of his history and circumstances, that I can confidently assert he never possessed an actual capital equal to a fiftieth part of that debt.

The vast sums that are lost by failures in this branch of trade, are lost, not by the planters, who are almost always on the safe side of the books, but generally by our manufacturers and private persons in this country, or by merchants who had no share in the profits, and did not mean therefore to take the risks, of West Indian commerce.

planters who were safe for the time, and turning them over to eager novices in the same line of business as soon as their securities became precarious. Such men are able often to reap the large benefits of Colonial consignments and factorage, without any of those risks which counterpoise them; because the few prosperous planters who stand in no need of loans from their correspondents in England naturally select for their consignees the safest and longest established houses, in a trade of which they well know the perils. They are also not rarely appointed, for the same reason, receivers and testamentary trustees; and in that way profit largely even by the most embarrassed and sinking estates, obtaining all the benefits of their consignments, without risking any part of their capital.

Should any of my readers not be satisfied with these explanations, and with the strong testimonies I have cited as to the general case of the planters, and the loss of commercial capital in their hands, let them read the Report of a Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to consider the Commercial State of the West India Colonies, printed by order of the House 24th July 1807, and all doubts I am sure will be removed. They will find there, by a mass of concurrent evidence collected from the most authoritative sources, that a return of ten per cent on the capital of sugar planters is necessary to give them a living profit, after defraying their annual expenses, ordinary and extraordinary; and yet that in a long series of years, taking good and bad times together, they had not averaged one-third of that amount\*.

It is, I am aware, a difficult thing to dislodge that prejudice long resident in the public mind, which represents the West Indies as mines of national wealth, instead of what they really are,—gulfs for the perpetual absorption of national treasure and blood, without any adequate returns. Reason and truth in such cases gain but a

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\* The full and exact statistical and economical details of Mr. Bryan Edwards in his History of the West Indies, book 5, chap. 3, may also be referred to. He demonstrates from them that in Jamaica, by far the most fortunate and productive of our old colonies, the clear annual profit averaged by the planter is but seven per cent on his capital, "without charging a shilling for making good the decrease of the Negroes, or for the wear and tear of the buildings, or making any allowance for dead capital, or for hurricanes, fires, or other losses, which sometimes," he says, "destroy in a few hours the labour of years." He supposes also the comparatively rare advantages of the planter's residing on his estate, and acting with all possible prudence; and what is not more common, on his employing a capital entirely his own, instead of his being in bondage to his consignees, or to other creditors, where the legal interest is six per cent. He speaks of ordinary times; and his data as to prices &c. are taken from the experience of ten years, from 1781 to 1791. Taking his facts, and those of the Committee together, it is manifest that the most prudent Jamaica planters, during a period of near forty years, cannot have made on an average so much as four per cent, instead of the ten which is necessary to save them from loss: and yet they generally use a capital borrowed at six per cent; or if borrowed at five from their consignees, are subjected to disadvantages that make the loan still dearer, and are charged compound interest on all arrears. If such is the average case, what must it be with the less fortunate and less prudent majority? and how can it be doubted, or wondered at, that insolvency and ruin are the ordinary perennial lot of the planters at large?

tardy and doubtful victory over ancient prepossessions. Witness the invincible attachment of Spain to her South American mines, and monopolies, and oppressions, the still fancied sources of her wealth and power, while all but Spanish eyes have long-seen in them the true causes of her decadency, poverty, and ruin.

It seems to be one of the appointed scourges of guilt, with nations as well as individuals, that long indulged immoral habits pervert the judgement, and give such a wrong direction to self-love, as to make them mistake even temporal evil for good, and cling to their darling offences after the baits held out by temptation have proved to be delusive and worthless.

The miser who began to hoard and to extort, from a too anxious dread perhaps of the evils of poverty, continues to do so when sinking into his grave under loads of wealth that he cannot use, and imposes on himself by extreme penuriousness the very sufferings he feared to incur. The voluptuary persists in his intemperance, when his impaired health and debilitated organs refuse even the dear-bought gratifications he once derived from it, and give him nausea and pain in their stead. Nations, in like manner, have often been excited by ambition or avarice, or the pride of freedom, to trample on the rights of others, and have fancied the bad course advantageous, long after too extensive usurpations, and protracted wars, have exhausted their resources, enfeebled their power, and plunged them in domestic slavery and wretchedness.

An explanation I conceive is to be found in the inveterate association of ideas between the objects of temptation, and the bad means by which they are pursued: as a horse is caught by the sieve, though you have ceased to place in it the corn which was his compensation for the bridle,—so men and nations who have been accustomed to find, in violations of the moral law, real or imaginary good, are prone to persist in their course when the supposed advantages have ceased, and the sin has become, to every man's conviction but their own, a clearly gratuitous evil. There arises a strong prejudice in their minds on the immoral side, which experience can hardly correct. Some measures, and systems of measures, would be plainly seen to be weak, if their wickedness did not serve to raise a false presumption of their wisdom.

The conduct of the powers of Europe in the New World presents a strong confirmation of these views. We see it in the past and present Colonial measures of Spain. What has she gained by the cruel depopulation of Hayti, Mexico, and Peru? We see it at the present crisis, when, amidst her last convulsions as a colonizing power, she is fondly cherishing her Slave-trade at Cuba, only to increase there the approaching revolutionary harvest of her revolted subjects.

Portugal and Brazil illustrate in the same way the same sin-born perversion of judgement; though it is not yet quite so conspicuous to a careless observer. Nor is the conduct of France in deluging her Windward Islands with the Slave-trade, while ratifying the in-

dependence of St. Domingo, less impressive on every considerate mind. The infatuation of our own West Indian policy, is only not so plain to us, because we view it, under the influence which I have described, with selfish and partial eyes. We have abolished the Slave-trade; yet we still dream that the Slavery of our Sugar Colonies, though guilty and opprobrious, is gainful, while the well-attested experience of more than half a century has proved it directly the reverse.

In what way, let us next inquire, is the public compensated not only for the costly sacrifices I have noticed, but for all the waste of capital that is thus invested, and all the consequent heavy losses that fall upon British creditors, and on the public purse? Not certainly by the finding employment for our industrious poor; and relieving our parishes from the charge of maintaining a surplus population. If the poorer lands in this country are cultivated at a loss to the proprietors, and had therefore better in a national view be thrown out of tillage, as some economists contend, there is this answer at least to their arguments,—that many hands are employed on such lands, which would otherwise be idle, and whose subsistence would augment parochial burthens. But in the West Indies, we have no such compensation: not one hard-handed man from this country finds employment in the culture of the sugar-cane. We send them a few emigrants it is true; but not of the agricultural, or even of the servile class; the employment of both being superseded by predial and domestic Slavery: but while these Colonies alone, among all our distant possessions, relieve us from none of our paupers, they contribute largely to the increase of that burthensome class. Hundreds and thousands of widows and children are cast upon our parishes by the privation of husbands and fathers who perish in that fatal climate, while serving there in our fleets and armies to make Slave-holders and their families safe.

Is the compensation we are in quest of then to be found in revenue? If we really derived from the pockets of our planters, as is absurdly pretended, the duties paid here on the importation of their produce, it would I admit amount to some, though a very inadequate compensatory benefit. But that idle pretence is scarcely worth refutation. It is too gross to deceive even the most inconsiderate mind. It would be precisely the same thing in principle to say that we are indebted to China for our duties on tea, or for our duties on tobacco to Virginia. Nay, in the former instance, the absurdity would be less glaring; because, if China did not supply us with tea, I know not where else we could obtain that specific subject of taxation; whereas South America, the East Indies, and even the foreign West India Islands, would supply us amply with sugar. Yet to such preposterous arguments are the Colonial writers driven, in defence of their ruinous system, that they never fail to exhibit with exultation accounts of the imports of sugar, and the duties received thereon in this country, assuming them as incontestible items in their estimates of the value of our Colonies, and as

benefits too derived from Slavery, which we must lose by its termination. It was by the very same fallacies, and others of a kindred nature, that they deterred us for twenty years from renouncing the execrable Slave-trade.

The great amount of tonnage employed in West Indian voyages, has always been another of their favourite topics. With the loss of this benefit also, the country has been menaced; as if it depended not on our will to buy the tropical produce that we want to import, in the East Indies, or in such other countries only as permit its shipment in British bottoms; or as if an East Indian were less than a West Indian freight, or a given freight would be less beneficial to the ship-owner, because the cargo was not raised by Slave-labour under a British Colonial Government. With a like perversion of the plainest commercial principles, they take credit for the whole of our exports to the West Indies (without deducting even that large part of them which, though they passed through their free ports, were destined for Spanish America); and they threaten us with the loss of this branch of our trade also, if we disturb their interior system; as if the costly sovereignty of islands peopled with Slaves, were a necessary mean of obtaining, for the best and cheapest manufactures in the world, a preference from their purchasers and consumers. The flourishing state of our trade with the North American States since they ceased to be British, with the openings now made for our direct trade to every part of the Southern continent, might well suffice to refute such idle alarms if they ever had any foundation.

Perhaps, however, we shall now hear of such alarms no more; because, if they are well founded, Mr. Huskisson must recall the boons he has recently conferred on the Colonies. We have no longer any other security for a preference in their navigation and trade, than the inherent energies of our manufacturing industry and commerce.

Where then, I repeat, is the value of these Colonies to be found? or rather, what is the indemnity for all that we sacrifice, and all that we annually lose by them? One negative benefit, it may perhaps be replied, we certainly have by their defence. A large capital has been invested in them; and this will be lost, it may be said, if we abolish Slavery. But what is the capital worth to us if we *do not*? There is many a stately mansion in the building of which a large capital was spent, which the owner nevertheless finds it his interest to abandon or take down, because no rent can be obtained for it equal to the perpetual expense of its conservation and repairs. A capital so invested as to produce nothing on an average but loss, is in effect already sunk. The property of a Poyais stockholder would not be more completely annihilated, if the stock receipts and books were burnt.

I grant, indeed, that the bubble of sugar-planting by Slave-labour has not yet lost all its credit; and therefore one individual who holds a plantation, or a mortgage on it, may still find another

individual willing to purchase. So might the subscribers to a gaming-house perhaps. As between the private buyer and seller, the thing, I admit, is worth what it will sell for. But the question here is of a public, not of an individual interest; and consequently of a real, not an imaginary value; for the public has no interest in the price of the transfer from one subject to another, but only in the fructification to the national benefit of the property itself, by whatever British subjects it may be held. When the Colonists put it as an argument of public policy, that a large capital is at stake in our islands, they speak, if the argument has any relevancy, of a national, not a private interest, in its conservation; and this interest I have shown to be a negative quantity. If my premises, derived from their own testimony, are sound, they might as well contend that it is for the public benefit to maintain the establishment at Crockfords; nay much better; for though that establishment produces no national wealth, it is not maintained, as those colonial gaming-tables are, at a vast expense to the country.

And now let us examine more particularly the other side of this account. How much does the conservation of this profitless capital cost to the Parent State?

I regret much that there are no authoritative public documents to show the true amount of the public expenditure in West India services from the year 1792 to the present period; or even to exhibit a fair and full account of it for any portion of that time. I am aware, at least, of no such document; and it is a desideratum which I hope some parliamentary friend of the Slaves will endeavour soon to supply, by moving for the necessary returns.

In the Preface to my *Delineation of Slavery* I noticed the defect of information on this important subject, which obliged me there to offer a conjectural estimate, that our Sugar Colonies had cost us, during the last thirty years, a hundred and fifty millions of national debt. A zealous champion of those Colonies, whose services they have publicly extolled, and richly rewarded, finds fault with this conjecture of mine as a great exaggeration, and says, "it ought to be divided by five," an estimate which, like my own, being unsupported by any data, stands consequently like that, solely on the credit which his readers may give to the guesses of its author; but surely the people of England ought to have better means of judging whether a hundred-and-fifty millions, or thirty millions only, is the nearest approach to the amount of debt charged upon them for the maintenance of West India Slavery.

Till that is obtained, I shall adhere to my own estimate in opposition to Mr. Macqueen's; and for this reason among others, that my own is at least a sincere one, while it is impossible for me to read that strange work of his, or any five consecutive pages of it, without perceiving that the only standard of truth or probability with him, is the interest of his employers. Even when the fullest and clearest parliamentary returns on the subject shall be obtained, his pen will be as loose as ever; for if he dislikes, but cannot hope to invalidate such evidence, he will not scruple to get rid of it by dis-

location and mutilation of the text. Nay, he will rail in good set terms against any opponent who presumes to cite it fairly\*.

I have not myself had an opportunity of examining with care the printed Parliamentary documents, which contain accounts of the public expenditure in our Slave Colonies upon the present peace establishment: but I am assured by a friend, who has taken pains to explore and throw together such information on this subject as can be found in those documents, that the annual expense, civil and military, on the present peace establishment (including with the bills drawn on the Treasury expressly for this branch of service, the value of the naval, military, and ordnance stores sent from Europe, the expenses of the transport service, and the pay of the navy and army employed there), considerably exceeds one million five hundred thousand pounds; which in the thirty years included

\* To justify such a stricture on this author, whose extraordinary work has been adopted and accredited to the public by plausible resolutions of some of the Assemblies, and munificent rewards to boot, I will for once make an exception to my rule of leaving unnoticed all the personalities and effusions of controversial spite to which my labours in this cause might subject me, except they should be such as I may be bound to put into the hands of my attorney: for it may serve as a useful caution to uninformed readers of publications in defence of Slavery; and lead them to pause and inquire carefully, not only on what these Colonial champions assert, but what they affect, and appear perhaps, to prove. Mr. Macqueen, in the few paragraphs which he is pleased to bestow on my View of Slavery, ventures thus to attack its general character and credit.—“*It exhibits a distortion of facts, and MUTILATION OF OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, such as the public have again and again seen, and again and again condemned and reprobated, in the publications put forth from the same quarter, and for the same object. Upon opening the volume at page 212, the following extract upon the subject of religious establishments in the Colonies first caught my eye: viz. ‘THE GOVERNOR OF TRINIDAD EXPRESSES HIS CONCERN THAT THERE IS NO CHURCH, OR CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT IN THAT ISLAND.’ Parliamentary Papers of 1818, p. 212. Astonishment,*” he adds, “*and indignation filled my mind. I had in my possession at the moment a communication from Sir Ralph Woodford, the Governor of Trinidad, to Earl Bathurst upon the same subject, and extracted from the same Parliamentary Papers, 212 and 214: and let the extracts speak for themselves.*”—(Macqueen, page 398.)

And how does Mr. Macqueen let this Parliamentary evidence speak for itself, or rather for himself? Surely the “*astonishment and indignation*” which he professes to have felt will be no factitious feeling in the minds of my readers, when I show them that it is by resorting to the very fraud which he injuriously imputes, that of “*mutilating official documents*,” by suppressing those parts of Sir Ralph Woodford’s letter which clearly support my proposition, and dexterously putting together distant paragraphs in it relative to different subjects, in order by a false context to mislead his readers as to the sense of the proposition itself.

Sir Ralph Woodford in the letter referred to, being an answer to a circular letter from Earl Bathurst to the Colonial Governors, with inquiries respecting the state of the *Established Church* in each island, in respect of clergymen, tithes, or stipends, writes thus:

“I communicated to the protestant minister such parts of your Lordship’s letter as related to him more particularly, and herewith inclose a copy of Mr. Clapham’s reply.

“*In complying with the remaining instructions of your Lordship’s signification of His Royal Highness’s commands, it is my painful duty to observe that there are no establishments for the Clergy in this island.*”

Here the reader sees my quotation fully justified; not in substance merely, but



in my estimate, would amount to forty-five millions sterling, supposing them even all years of peace; whereas twenty-one of them, with the exception of the brief peace of Amiens, were times of war; and during several of them, our operations in the West Indies were of a very extensive and costly nature; and the expenditure was aggravated by frauds and peculations, afterwards discovered, to a vast amount. If we assign to those years of war, taking them together, only twice the amount of the present peace establishment, we shall have the further sum of thirty-one millions and a half, making, with the forty-five, seventy-six and a half millions of sterling money. But the reader will recollect that the estimate I made was a hundred and fifty millions of *public debt*, and that a large part of the money expended during the most expensive period of the war in the West Indies was borrowed when our funds were at the lowest points of depression.

There are also many very serious subjects of expense, which, in terms. How then, he may exclaim, does Mr. Macqueen contrive to cite this very document in support of his "astonishment, his indignation," and his foul imputation of fraud? *I answer, by the very simple and honest expedient of LEAVING OUT THE SECOND PARAGRAPH, WHICH I HAVE PRINTED WITH ITALICS, ALTOGETHER!!!*

But my *virtuously indignant* antagonist did not think even this quite enough. He wished to represent me as having quoted Sir R. Woodford not only for what he had not said, but for the very reverse of what he had actually said in that letter; and to this end a more elaborate contrivance was wanted.

Sir Ralph, after this return to that which *was* the subject of inquiry in the circular of Earl Bathurst, viz. the state of our *Church establishment* in that government, proceeded in subsequent paragraphs to notice what was *not* the subject of it, and still less of my proposition, the state of the *Spanish Roman Catholic Clergy*, who had remained there from the time of the conquest.

Immediately after the paragraph so boldly suppressed, he writes thus;

*"When the Cedula of 1783 was issued, the King of Spain declared his intention of giving a fit salary to the Priests, and exempted his new subjects from tythe, which until now has never been paid; and the Priests have continued on the same salary of 400 dollars, which sum will not enable any person to live decently in this country: it is the wages of the poorest Negro mechanic," &c.*

"Having found the Rev. Don Joaquim de Aristimano at the head of the Catholic Church, I have only to bear testimony to his labours and to his disinterestedness, as to those of the friar José de Riecla," &c. "I have personally," he adds, "taken every opportunity in my power to countenance and support their laudable endeavours, but the erection of churches and chapels is as indispensable as the better payment of the Clergy."

How could these paragraphs be made to consist, the reader may demand, with the imputations of falsehood and calumny, even if the want of a Catholic priesthood had been alleged; for if the priests have neither churches nor chapels, nor tithes, nor stipends, beyond the wages of the poorest Negro workman, there would have been, if not perfect accuracy, at least nothing slanderous, in saying that there were no establishments even for the Catholic Church! But Mr. Macqueen's way of making "*his extracts speak for themselves*" is a cure for every difficulty. *He has actually left out these passages also!! All the words that I have printed in italics are suppressed by him; while he gives the subsequent encomium on the Spanish Clergy, as if the subject had there commenced!!!*

He could not resist the temptation of extracting from the inclosed letter of the Rev. Mr. Clapham much that is said by that gentleman against the Methodist Missionaries; though there were passages in it which, like the suppressed paragraphs in the Governor's letter, went clearly to confirm my statement; for Mr. Clapham complains of the want of *any church* in the island since 1808, when the

though fairly chargeable in this account with the Colonies, are not to be distinguished as Colonial expenditure in the public accounts my friend has examined.

Among them is that lamentable item, the great expense of restoring to our army and navy the multitudes of well-disciplined troops, and able seamen and marines, which perish in that fatal climate.

To treat this indeed as a mere æconomical consideration would be to wrong the feelings of my readers. It forms a pre-eminent substantive objection to that odious and impolitic system from which the necessity of sacrificing ingloriously and cruelly so many brave men, in peace as well as war, arises.

Here we have another desideratum that ought to be supplied by parliamentary investigation, viz. the number of British soldiers and seamen that have fallen victims to disease in West Indian service within the same period of thirty years; a true account of which would be impressive and appalling. If I mistake not, such an ac-

single one it possessed was burnt down, and ascribes to that defect his want of success among the Slaves. "*For some little time after the calamity of the fire,*" he says, "*I had no place for public worship; and the service of the church has since been removed to six different rooms, none of which could be rendered sufficiently commodious for the purpose.*" But this "indignant imputer of mutilations" suppresses these passages also!!

Having thus honestly made his "extracts speak for themselves," he proceeds thus to triumph in the fancied success of his imposture.

"*Mr. Stephen may call his conduct in this instance DEALING FAIRLY WITH THE PUBLIC: to me it appears to be conduct such as was never before pursued by any one, to injure one country, or to mislead another. When the reader is informed that the volume in question is made up of similar MUTILATIONS AND MISREPRESENTATIONS, he will probably think he has heard enough of it.*" And so he dismisses my work.

As the extremity of this assurance may inspire a doubt whether my exposition of it is quite correct, I hope any of my readers who are in possession of my antagonist's work and mine, and of the parliamentary document we both refer to, will take the trouble of collating them; viz. my *Delineation of Slavery*, p. 212, Macqueen's *West India Colonies*, 397 to 399, and the papers on Slavery printed by order of the House of Commons of the 10th June 1818, p. 211; and if I am found to do this writer any injustice let me be condemned as unworthy of any future confidence or credit.

After all, what is the gist of the imputation? Why, that I had untruly and calumniously represented the Colonies as neglectful of religious establishments. Now in the very part and page of my work that is the subject of the charge, I had stated as strongly in the same brief way the want of them in other Colonies acquired at or since the peace of 1763; and yet this champion of them all passes their cases unnoticed, selecting for the sole subject of his *candid* refutation, the single case of Trinidad, i. e. of a Colony where the Crown has retained the whole legislative power, and consequently is alone chargeable with the neglect. In fact, my purpose, as the reader who refers to the work will see, was to arraign, not the Assemblies, but rather the Ministry of the mother country in modern times, for having been less attentive to the interests of religion in the establishments of the new Colonies, than their predecessors had been in the old.

I ought however to have done them the justice to say that in this case of Trinidad, they had obtained many years ago a very large grant from Parliament for building a church or churches in that island. I think it was no less than 50,000*l.*; but the application of it was left to the Colonial authorities; and it appears from the mutilated letter of the Rev. Mr. Clapham that not a single church had been built. I hope when Mr. Macqueen next writes he will explain this awkward fact.

count as to the army was once moved for, and refused on the plea that it would dishearten the troops ordered on that dreadful service.

In the same paragraph of my late work, in which I gave as a conjectural estimate that the Sugar Colonies had cost us during the last thirty years at least a hundred and fifty millions in national debt incurred, I added, "and *fifty thousand lives*;" and Mr. Macqueen, I observe, while he represents the former as excessive by four fifths, finds no fault with the latter; but contents himself with saying, "that we may thank for the loss of lives in the Colonies my great predecessors in Negro emancipation, the Goddess of reason, liberty, and equality;" meaning, I presume, that French revolutionary principles produced the insurrection in St. Domingo; and that our vain attempt to suppress it and restore the cart-whip by British armies, was a proper and necessary consequence. He tacitly admits, then, my estimate of this dreadful loss; and admits also that it was incurred in the cause of Negro Slavery; a fact too notorious indeed to be disputed.

Now the far greater part of this shocking mortality fell upon troops raised during our first arduous war with the French republic, when it was a current and I believe moderate computation that every effective soldier landed in the West Indies had cost the country in recruiting and bounty-money, training, and transport charges, and other incidental expenses, at least a hundred pounds sterling. Here then is an expense of five millions sterling, borrowed chiefly at times when our Stocks had sunk to their lowest depression; exclusive of all the charges after the arrival of the troops in that fatal field till they perished in loathsome hospitals.

Let this be added to the seventy-six and a half millions, and the amount will be eighty-one millions and a half in money, which, having regard to the terms it was raised upon, will go far, I apprehend, to support my general estimate, independently of the loss of seamen and marines, and all other subjects of unaccounted and incidental charge. The reader at least will find no difficulty in judging whether my proposition or that of my antagonist has the best title to his confidence.

My estimate of the numbers lost, however (avowedly, like the other, a mere guess, in the regretted absence of authentic information), was, I now believe, much too low; and it was therefore, no doubt, that my opponent left it unquestioned. It amounts only to about 1660 per annum, which is probably less than the average loss in the Sugar Colonies collectively, even on a peace establishment; and when the enormous destruction by disease of the large military and naval forces employed under Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jarvis, at the Windward Islands in 1793, and under General Abercromby and other commanders in succeeding years (all periods of a frightful mortality), are taken into the account, with the far greater and long continued waste of life in St. Domingo, it will appear not unlikely that my estimate for thirty years, including the two last wars, was less by many thousands than the

truth. What the whole number of troops embarked for West Indian service in Great Britain and Ireland was from the time of the first rupture with the French Republic to the end of the last war, and how many of them returned, are facts of which the public ought to be officially informed.

The greatest embarkations by far were during the first three years of that period, from 1793 to 1796 both included; and I am not aware of any authority to which I can refer for their amount. From that time to the Peace of Amiens we had very few military operations in the West Indies; our contests with the French at the Windward Islands having ceased, and our ardour for conquest and counter-revolution in St. Domingo having been so well cooled by failure, calamity, and death, that we no longer aimed at more than the defence of the few positions there which we had fatally taken and retained. The official account of British troops actually mustered in the West Indies from April 1796 to 1802, which I shall presently cite, and of the mortality by disease among them, will, in respect of actual loss, show but a small amount when we shall be enabled to compare it with that of the three preceding years. The proportion, however, to the number of troops actually employed, will enable us in some measure to guess at that of the former period. The account I refer to is given by the late Sir William Young in his "*West India Common Place Book*," p. 218, being a collection of papers officially presented to Parliament while he sat in the House of Commons; and the document, I presume, was furnished by Government, to justify or recommend the employment of Black troops, to which during that period it had in some degree resorted; for the object of the paper was to show the comparative mortality among them, and the British soldiers respectively, in each of the seven years comprised in it.

The general result of this official account is, that the average loss by death in our European corps, exclusive of losses in action, during less than seven years, was no less than *twenty-one and a half per cent per annum*, while in the Black corps it was only five and three-quarters per cent. But this average, frightful though it is, appears by the same paper to give a very inadequate idea of the destruction made by disease among troops newly arrived from Europe, and the consequent mortality of preceding years, when our grand expeditions took place; for in the first year (1796), computing from April, when we mustered in the West Indies 19,676 European soldiers, we lost by sickness no less than 6484, *being forty and a half per cent*, calculated on the medium of the monthly returns, in twelve months, while the Black troops lost only three per cent; and by a more particular examination of the account itself, which I will print in an appendix, it will be found that the annual loss was always in the greatest ratio when the numbers mustered were increased from those of the preceding year, which of course must have been by new arrivals from Europe.

I find little difficulty, therefore, in giving credit to the following statement of a cotemporary historian:—"From the month of Octo-

ber 1793, when they (the British troops) first landed in St. Domingo, to the month of *March following*, the loss in the several engagements, or rather skirmishes, did not exceed 100; but the victims of disease were upwards of 6000, including 130 officers\*." Or even this still more appalling statement on the same authority:—"The annual mortality was at least equal to the annual importation; in other words, the deaths were always equal to the arrivals†."

If we adopt the statement of a loss of 6000 in five months, and suppose it a fair proportion of the mortality during that fatal period of our war in St. Domingo which is not included in the parliamentary account, we shall have a loss in that island alone of no less than thirty-six thousand lives; and, if we add 17,173, the subsequent loss in West India service, comprised in that account to 1802, the total would be no less than 53,173 by disease alone, without including any part of the loss in Jamaica, and the Windward Islands, prior to April 1796, the amount of which was notoriously very great indeed; not less, I am persuaded, than 8000 men. To the whole is to be added the loss from 1802 to the present period or to 1823, to which my former estimate extended; and if we reduce the annual loss in those twenty-one years to 990 per annum, the last annual loss comprised in the parliamentary return, we shall have a further amount of 20,790, making in all 81,963. Should this estimate of the unaccounted loss in St. Domingo be thought excessive, let it be observed, on the other hand, that the returns I have cited contain only the loss by disease in our regular infantry regiments. The artillery, ordnance, and other descriptions of forces are not included, nor any part of the heavy losses among our seamen and marines, nor losses in action in either branch of service.

These dreadful effects of the climate were by no means peculiar to those wars of ours, which may justly be called wars against Negro freedom. West India service was always terribly destructive to our army and navy, though that pre-eminently fatal disease, the yellow fever, began to scourge us when we first fought against the liberty of the Negroes, and was an ally to their cause critically and decisively important. Nor have our devoted soldiers and seamen ceased to feel the scourge of that baneful climate since they ceased to have any other employment in it than that of guarding the masters in our Colonies in time of peace from the apprehended insurrections of their slaves. In 1819 two regiments (I think one of them was the 15th) went to Jamaica, said to contain together nearly or quite 1600 men. In two months after their arrival they had lost 600. My informant was a major in the army, a friend on whose veracity I could quite rely, and who had just received the account in a letter from his brother in that island, which brought down the sad progress of mortality to the month of September or October. I afterwards had a general confirmation of it from other

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\* New Annual Register for 1796.

† Ibid.

channels, with the addition that the loss had been extended to about 800 within the same year.\*

I could quote much information to the like effect from other islands, and at various periods; but unless our periodical prints could be supposed to conspire together to invent facts of this kind, and forge letters from the West Indies to confirm them, no reader of the London newspapers can well doubt the general truth that I wish here to establish\*.

This most lamentable of all the evils entailed on us by our Sugar Colonies (the guilt and shame of maintaining their interior system excepted) is pre-eminently, I repeat, chargeable on that system, and on their bigoted adherence to it; because it is their consequent imbecility, together with their aversion to Black corps, the only troops fit for the climate, that alone make it necessary to maintain European garrisons for their defence; though that new scourge from Heaven, the yellow fever, most remarkably and universally spares the African race, while British soldiers and seamen are its chosen victims. The destroying angel made not a more entire and accurate distinction between the enslaved Israelites and their Egyptian masters.

\* I will subjoin a few extracts from many of the same tendency in newspapers that I have preserved.

NEW TIMES, July 19, 1820.

*Extract of a letter from Portsmouth, July 17.*

"This morning arrived the Iphygenia of 66 guns from Jamaica. Since her absence from England she has lost 85 men, including the master, lieutenant of marines, and six midshipmen."

MORNING CHRONICLE, November 10, 1820.

*Extract of a letter from Tobago.*

"After mentioning an alarm from an apprehended insurrection, the writer says, 'From the great loss of troops by the late fever our garrison was reduced from nearly 200 to 30 men.'"

NEW TIMES, January 19, 1822.

"Letters and papers have been received from the island of Dominica dated November 9. They contain the melancholy tidings of a dreadful fever, that in a few days cut off three officers, one sergeant, two corporals, and fifty-six privates, of His Majesty's 5th regiment of foot, out of 137 who landed there the month preceding. Only Colonel Emes, Captain Thysh, Ensign Wyatt, and eleven privates were free from the attack, all the rest being either dead or in the hospital."

TIMES, November 7, 1825.

"We have received letters from Jamaica, which we regret to state describe the visitation of that destructive disease the fever of that country, as being more fatal among the troops, and the crews of the ships, than it was in several preceding seasons. The following are extracts. 'The squadron has suffered much, particularly the Lively and Pylades; and the troops in consequence of their losses, particularly in Spanish Town, are to change their quarters. During the last eight months one regiment out of five (in numbers) have fallen victims to this destructive malady. The officers have fallen, out of all proportion: the 77th regiment on being embarked from Stoney Hill barracks for the north side of the island, had only one officer able to accompany them. Colonel Thornton, governor of Fort Charles, Port Royal, died on the 2nd instant, making the third victim who held that appointment in nineteen months. He had been only five weeks and three days on the island.'"

It might have been hoped and expected that the Colonists, before whose eyes this striking peculiarity of the new disease and its dreadful ravages among their brave defenders had been long exhibited, would from pity, if not from policy, have been disposed to relax their proud and jealous prejudices, so far as to favour the experiment of substituting in some degree Blacks for European soldiers. But in this, as in all other cases, their antipathy and contempt towards the African race were proof against the loudest pleadings of humanity. I might add, against the plainest suggestions of prudence also; if they had not been taught by experience to believe that there was no sacrifice, however dreadful and however needless, that they might not extort from the Mother Country, in compliance with their darling maxims, when stoutly maintained. They therefore persisted in opposing the resort to a soldiery exempt from that direful plague, till Government, impelled by the extremity of the case, overruled their opposition, and found, as it would do by firmness in the present controversy, that there is no difficulty and no danger in Colonial improvements, except when it drops the reins, and makes impotency contumacious, by proposing and entreating, where it ought to act and to command.

At a time when, from the dreadful ravages of the yellow fever, a British soldier's life among them was not worth six months' purchase, the Colonists inexorably objected to the expedient of raising corps of Black troops, by purchase in the different islands, to assist our sickly regiments in the more laborious duties of their defence. On an application by General Abercromby to the Assembly of Barbadoes, to which he first addressed himself for its concurrence in that plan, it gave him a positive refusal, and passed a resolution, moved in a committee of the whole House by its Speaker, declaring "that the measure would be more likely to prove destructive than advantageous to the defence of the island." If I mistake not, a like repulse was given by every Assembly to which the proposition was then made. Happily their aid, or their consent, was not necessary; for there was no law to prevent His Majesty from recruiting his army in that way if he pleased. Individual masters, therefore, were tempted by high prices to sell their slaves; and though those whom they commonly chose to part with were of course not the best and most orderly of their class, yet the Black corps thus raised (evasively and unfairly called "the West India Regiments,") acted in both the wars in a way that did them honour as soldiers; and their services in "fatigue parties," as they were termed, saved perhaps more than ten times the number of our European troops. In no respect did their conduct afford any countenance to the fears, or rather the contemptuous prejudices, of the privileged class. Every plausible ground of objection, therefore, to this wise and happy expedient was removed. Nevertheless, Colonial influence finally prevailed so far as to obtain the reduction of these invaluable corps at the peace, and the cruel transportation of many, or most of them, to distant parts of the world. The dreadful waste to which the British army is subjected, to maintain the wretched interior system

of the Sugar Colonies, is thus needlessly and wantonly enhanced, by our complaisance for the vain terrors and stubborn prejudices to which that system gives rise in the breasts of its administrators.

Whatever the feelings of the White Colonists may be on this painful subject, you, my countrymen, I am sure, will agree with me that such a perpetual drain of our bravest blood is a great public calamity; and one that strongly reinforces our other obligations to correct the grand moral evil of Slavery, from which alone it proceeds. Should we soon be called upon for great military exertions nearer home (and who that looks to the state of Ireland can deny the possibility of such an event?) during the present vastly increased extent of our distant possessions, we shall perhaps regret too late the waste of West India service. That waste indeed is not the only evil. The cruel hardships imposed on the officers and soldiers and their families, must tend in no small degree to check the honourable zeal by which our army is recruited or enlarged. To be sent on a forlorn hope or storming party, is a destination not so dangerous; and the danger is compensated by glory: but the brave men who are sent in times of peace to the West Indies, have no laurels to gain, or booty to expect. They have to use their arms, if at all, against a crowd of poor unarmed wretches, in an odious cause; and though almost sure, with few exceptions, to perish, it is not in the arms of victory, or on the turf of a well-fought field, but on the pallet of enervating disease, or amidst the horrors of an hospital or a pest-house. For my part, who have intimately known their hapless lot, I never hear of regiments embarking for the West Indies, without sensations of sympathy as powerful as if I were sure the brave unfortunates would all perish by shipwreck on the voyage.

And here, my countrymen, let me press my appeal to those humane feelings by which you are most distinguished. The Colonists, by delusive representations and partial views, attempt to disarm them; or even to enlist them in their own bad cause. They invoke your compassion for their distress as planters, and for the total ruin with which they assert themselves to be menaced; though no thinking man among you who impartially weighs the admitted facts I have cited, can doubt that the reformation, not the support, of their pernicious system, alone can effectually help or save them. But were it otherwise, what benevolent mind could be reconciled to the support of that system, at such a terrible expense of the lives of our brave soldiers and seamen, as that by which alone, as we have seen, it is or can be maintained? They reason, in respect of the poor unpitied Africans, as if property were all, and the bodily sufferings and premature deaths of their much-oppressed Black labourers of no account. But could you adopt the same partial views, and eject from the pale of your humanity all who are not of your own complexion and lineage, still how can they hope to reconcile you to the cruel destruction of such multitudes of your European fellow-subjects as are annually doomed to perish in their hospitals, merely to save them from the dreaded consequences of extreme injustice and oppression? They alarm your feelings with affected apprehensions



of danger to their own lives, and those of their wives and children, from the effects of parliamentary interposition on behalf of the Slaves: as if misery and despair were less likely to urge men into insurrection, than a mitigation of bondage, and a hope of future freedom. It is in vain that experience has universally attested the contrary, by showing that enfranchisement, when introduced by the arm of the law, has every where been safe, and disastrous only when obtained by insurgent violence. You are nevertheless desired to believe that all the White inhabitants of our Sugar Colonies will be exterminated by the Blacks if you remove or relax their chains. But were we to meet them even on these extravagant premises, humanity would still have a larger interest on the side of justice than against it. From the facts that I have stated, it may be shown that our apprehensions for the safety of Jamaica probably cost us more British lives in a few years, during our late wars, than the entire amount of its whole White population, which its historian, Mr. Edwards, stated to be no more than 30,000; and it may with equal or great probability be affirmed, that during the last thirty-two years, one British soldier or seaman at the least, in the prime of life, has fallen a victim to the deathful service of the West Indies, for every White man, woman, and child that all our Sugar Colonies collectively contain. Their entire number, including the Colonies recently acquired, is but 67,055 by the last official returns, and the estimates of their advocates\*; and I have given reasons for believing that if like evidence could be procured of all the losses in our army and navy from West India service, the total amount since 1792 would be found at least equally, if not more than equally, large.

If it be said, in extenuation, that during this period our islands were exposed to unprecedented dangers, in consequence of the revolution in St. Domingo, and therefore required more than ordinary efforts, as well offensive as defensive, for their protection; I reply, let any reflecting reader consider the present attitude of Negro freedom in Hayti, and on the South American continent, with the known situation of Cuba; and then hope, if he can, that the next term of two-and-thirty years, compared with the last, will demand from us less numerous sacrifices of our brave troops and seamen for the security of our Slave-peopled Colonies. In one of the late manifestoes of the Assemblies, we are told that if we reform their Slavery as proposed by Government, it will require a hundred thousand British troops to defend our West India possessions; but the proposition might have been more justly reversed. It would cost us perhaps a hundred thousand men to withhold that reformation; and the end, after all, would not be attained. Parliament would probably indeed be spared the trouble of abolishing Slavery; for after the most lavish waste of life and treasure that the country could afford to prevent it, the Slaves, aided probably by their enfranchised foreign brethren, would be their own deliverers.

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\* Mr. Macqueen makes it 75,133; but 8078 is his estimate for the Mauritius, which is not included in any of these remarks.

Let the Colonists palliate these alarming views; and let it even be supposed, if they will, that after all the late extension of our Sugar Colonies, and the portentous revolutions in their vicinage, we may possibly still sustain their wretched system in its present rigour by such garrisons as we now maintain there; and further, that no war will occur to augment the difficulty for a period of twenty years to come:—yet, unless they can change the physical effects of their climate, at least from thirty to forty thousand of their unfortunate defenders would be consigned within that period to untimely and inglorious graves. And when are such cruel sacrifices to end? On *their* views and principles, twenty, fifty, or even a hundred years, would leave the case, at best, as it now stands; for they do not disguise their claim of right to make Slavery perpetual. They exclaim loudly against the idea of providing for the freedom of infants yet unborn; and all their protests against the invasion of what they call a right of property (a property not only in existing but future generations) will remain to the full as valid at any given period, however distant, as they can be supposed to be at the present moment. Nor can any state of the world be imagined in which the work of melioration and progressive enfranchisement can be more safely attempted than now. Let them then deal frankly with us; and plainly declare, that whereas we have already in the present generation redeemed them from wilful, if not chimerical, dangers, by paying to save their property more than it would fairly sell for, and for their persons at least life for life, they expect us in every succeeding generation to renew that fearful price.

I have now examined both sides of the account between the Mother Country and the Sugar Colonies. I have shown that every supposable consideration of benefits received from them, that may be thought to justify or explain the extreme forbearance of Parliament at the expense of national dignity and national duty, and the lavish sacrifices with which their contumacy has been rewarded, is unfounded in reason and truth. I have shown, on the other hand, that they are enormous insatiable drains on the treasure and the blood of the Mother-Country; and what is far the worst of all, their present conduct and pretensions, if acquiesced in, must place us under the most ignominious and intolerable yoke that ever was imposed on the neck of any nation; by obliging us to be the abettors and sanguinary instruments of a system, the injustice and cruelty of which we have recognised, and which they deny our right to control. The *imperium in imperio* for which they contend is to cast upon this great country all that is burthensome, all that is harsh and odious in sovereignty, with an incapacity for all its moral duties, and a privation of all its beneficent rights. It is in effect to reduce us to the condition of their own drivers, except that we are implicitly to enforce their despotic behests, not with the cart-whip, but the sword. In other words, we are to be reduced to the situation defined by the title to this work—we are to be the SLAVES OF OUR OWN SLAVE-COLONIES.

From this degrading yoke, and from all the guilt attached to it,

as well as the grievous public evils which we have been considering, it is my object to redeem you, by the only possible means; the calling forth, not in opposition to, but in aid of, the Government, your own zealous, determined, and persevering exertions.

At a late meeting in the county of Norfolk, convened for the purpose of petitioning Parliament on this great subject, the unanimity that ultimately prevailed, was for a while suspended; by the opposition of an honourable member, who, though he is a sincere and intelligent friend of the cause, entertained an apprehension that the proposed measure would be a virtual censure of the Government, and imply a suspicion of the sincerity of Ministers in the pledge they had given to us by the Resolutions of May 1823.

Though I have not the honour of any private acquaintance with that gentleman, I doubt not he will give me credit for the assertion, that in desiring to promote such meetings and a strong expression of the popular voice throughout the country, I am not actuated by any spirit hostile to the Administration: but the present is a case in which, to my firm conviction, the solicitations, and even the importunity, of the people at large, are necessary to enable Ministers to act up to their own professions and desires. This is no question, let us always remember, between Government and Opposition; nor could I be reasonably suspected of partiality to the latter if it were. I scruple not, indeed, to confess that our cause is, in my eyes, of such paramount importance, not only in a moral and religious, but in a political view, that if the party to which from personal predilections, as well as general political opinions, I was attached while in public life, were found more wanting in its duty in what related to Colonial Slavery than the party generally opposed to it, I should probably become an oppositionist, and a warm one. But though I certainly did see much to lament and condemn in the conduct of Ministers, in refusing their support to the bill for the registration of Slaves, and therefore felt it a painful duty to put an end to my parliamentary connexion with them, I have found nothing in the conduct of the Opposition, *as a body*, either in that instance, or during any stage of the subsequent controversies on these subjects, that entitles it to greater attachment or confidence from the friends of Colonial reform, than the party still in power. Nay, I must in justice go further, and avow that I think the Opposition in this respect more culpable than the Ministry; because if its conduct had not, from complaisance to some of its leading members connected with the Colonies, been very different from what might have been expected from Whigs, and friends of Mr. Fox, amounting, at best, to a chilling neutrality, the Government would have been better able to withstand and control that third party, powerful in its numbers and union, by which all effectual measures of Colonial reformation are sure to be perseveringly opposed.

Whether those are right who hold that a systematic opposition in Parliament on a principle of party attachment, is productive of more good than evil, I will not here inquire. But of this I am certain, that when powerful particular interests are opposed to public

duty and public good, the neutrality of one of the two great contending parties, like the paralysis of an antagonist muscle, prevents a natural and healthful action on the opposite side; and that the distortion therefore may appear on the right hand, when the morbid cause is on the left.

In such cases however, difficult though they are, there is one possible remedy; and it is that of which, as a friend, not an enemy of the Government, and to strengthen, not to weaken its hands, I would earnestly recommend the adoption.

My countrymen, our Constitution is a most happy one, for which we all owe much gratitude to Heaven; and I am not one of those who think it can be safely and beneficially altered. But a most essential part of it is the influence of the popular voice; and never is that influence more proper or necessary than when potent particular interests are banded in Parliament, and on both sides of the two Houses, against the rights, the interests, and the duties of the public at large. The present I maintain is a case of that kind; and as urgent a one as ever called for popular interposition.

Few, I believe, but those who sit in Parliament, or who have anxiously watched over the interests of the oppressed African race, are fully aware of the formidable extent of that influence with which we have to contend. In a Jamaica newspaper, published since the present controversy commenced, much surprise and discontent was expressed at the inaction of the Colonial interest in the House of Commons; where it was asserted confidently, and I doubt not from good information, that the Sugar Colonies had "two hundred sure votes." Whether the computation was accurate I do not pretend to determine; but well-informed members of the House have assured me that there are at least ninety-six, whom they know to be either proprietors of those Colonies, or so intimately connected with them, commercially and otherwise, that their votes cannot, without private sacrifices which few men have the resolution to make, be severed from the cause of the planters. If so, it is highly probable that the Jamaica computation is not beyond the truth; for what with the personal influence that so many members must naturally have with other gentlemen sitting in the same assembly, and the wide-spread connexions of Colonial proprietors with the landholders and merchants of this country, by means of which many members may of course be influenced, it may be reasonably computed that at least twice the number of those who are known to be bound to the West Indian cause, are directly or indirectly, by particular interests, or personal feelings, attached to it.

The agent of Barbadoes, himself a respectable English landholder, boasted not long since at a public meeting of the West India planters and merchants, that they were extensively connected as individuals with the landed property of England; and it was an assertion too well founded in truth. He might have added that they comprised in their own body, many members of the Upper House of Parliament, several proprietors of boroughs, some men

high in office, and others possessing the confidence and attachment of the most powerful men in the state.

It is not however by numbers only that the power of a party is to be estimated. The degree of zeal and of steadfastness with which the different members are attached to the common union, is of far greater importance than their numerical force. And it is here that the Colonial party in Parliament is truly formidable. It is a phalanx, which by its close and impenetrable union, its ardour, and its discipline, might bid defiance to a far more numerous host.

Men of experience in Parliament well know how to estimate the vast advantage of these qualities. It is a maxim among them, that a small part of the general representation, acting with determined concert and perseverance, would be capable of soon or late giving law to the House; except on questions to carry which the Government was obliged, in support of its own existence, to put forth all its force steadily against them. Where the two great conflicting parties are in contest, the case of course is different: full houses are convened, and effort on the one side is counterpoised by equal effort on the other. But when neither Government nor Opposition takes an active part as such, a particular party, firmly united by the private interest of its members, is sure, soon or late, to triumph; though if the entire representation were to be polled, it would be left, perhaps, in a small minority.

This is especially the case, I lament to say, in open questions, as they are called, of a moral kind, where there are particular interests on the one side, and a sense of conscientious obligation only on the other. Witness the twenty years of fruitless effort to abolish the now universally reprobated Slave-trade. That gross national iniquity might have been adhered to till this hour, if Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox, when they came into power, had not substituted, for the shameful neutrality of the Government, its determined support of the abolition. The present controversy turns on the same principles, and between the same parties. It is in a moral view nearly the same question; and the Government has strong temptations to act the same part with Lord Grenville's and Mr. Fox's predecessors, if not even actively to oppose the only effectual means of reform, parliamentary legislation.

Never was a particular faction more united, more zealous, and indefatigable than the Colonial party on this occasion. They concurred it is true, and with tacit unanimity, in Mr. Canning's resolutions; but so they did in Mr. Ellis's of 1797. They have no objection to refer any thing to the Assemblies. Even the Slave registration, though they stoutly and too effectually opposed Mr. Wilberforce's bill for it, they readily agreed should be recommended to those bodies, who first violently exclaimed against the plan, and afterwards took care effectually to defeat it by its ostensible but evasive adoption. But whenever any motion has been brought forward tending to induce Parliament to take the work of reformation into its own hands, the West Indian phalanx has always been fully

arrayed and drawn into action, not merely to oppose the proposition, but to clamour down discussion.

Let me not be understood as imputing generally to these gentlemen a disinclination to all the beneficent measures which they apparently acquiesced in, and which some of them expressly approved. I believe that there are among them many who would be glad if they could induce the Assemblies to adopt effectually the principles and the practical means recommended by His Majesty's Government; but in opposing the exercise of parliamentary authority, they are nearly unanimous; and the sincerity of their intentions can be of no avail to the unfortunate Slaves, while they resist pertinaciously the only means by which any thing really beneficial to them can possibly be accomplished.

There are indeed a few, a *very few* gentlemen, connected with the West Indies, who act a better part. I am far from overlooking the honourable distinction that is due to them, though to mention their names here might be inconvenient, or not grateful to themselves. But they do not belong to the banded party which the West India Committee directs; and therefore are not properly within the scope of these remarks.

I know well, my countrymen, that very many of you have expressed surprise and discontent, that after the intractable and contumacious spirit which the Assemblies had indulged during two years, no coercive measures were brought forward in the last sessions by the members who are still faithful to our cause in the House of Commons; and that no discussions even, except on incidental subjects, took place. We are continually assailed with inquiries and complaints from our friends on that account. They say, and truly say, that defeat is better than inaction; and that parliamentary discussions, at least, should frequently take place, as the best means of awakening, or keeping alive, the public attention to the irresistible merits of our cause. I hope and believe that our parliamentary friends will act hereafter on that principle; and I congratulate you that one of the most faithful and the most powerful of them, Mr. BROUGHAM, has pledged himself to bring in a Bill for carrying the Resolutions of May 1823 into effect, at the opening of the next session.

But let me, in justice to our friends, show you the extraordinary difficulties and discouragements under which they labour, and from which the loud expression of your voice can alone relieve them. It does not suit the views of our opponents that their case should be discussed at all. They are conscious that neither the situation of the Slaves, nor the conduct of the Assemblies, will bear examination. They therefore gravely pretend that it is very dangerous to discuss in Parliament topics so interesting to the Slaves, lest they should hear from our newspapers forsooth, what every Gazette of every Colony tells them freely, and in the most inflammatory manner, every week. The remote echo it seems is tremendous, though the direct voice may be heard through a speaking-trumpet without

alarm. Noise and violence are their weapons in that country; but here *Hush* is their watchword; and every gentleman who presumes to stir these subjects in the House of Commons is usually treated, by crowded West India benches, with rude clamours, such as make it very difficult for him to be heard, and more difficult still for a man of sensibility to maintain the course of his arguments, and do justice to his subject; while his antagonists, on the other hand, though speaking avowedly for what they deem their own particular interests, are cheered loudly, and heard patiently through the longest speech.

You regret, I know, Mr. Wilberforce's retirement; and some of you perhaps may blame it. For my part, I confess that I was one of the friends who advised the measure; but I would not have done so, notwithstanding the alarming decline of his health and strength, if his voice, on the only subjects worth the pain and hazard of its exertion, could have been fairly heard. Even against *him*, amiable and venerable as he is, these Colonial tactics were sometimes employed so effectually, that, enfeebled as his once sonorous and still musical voice has long been by age and infirmities, he might almost as well have uttered it *in vacuo* as in the House of Commons. Some West India members have been noticed making disorderly noises at the bar, purposely to drown and perplex him, such as the Speaker's interposition could not easily or effectually suppress.

If such a man, so pre-eminently entitled to a patient hearing on these subjects, and to the general respect of a Senate which his virtues and talents had adorned for more than forty years, could not obtain attention, our remaining friends there, you will believe, must have a very unpleasant and difficult duty to perform. The great misfortune here, and the great calamity of our cause in general, is that our enemies are numerous enough and powerful enough, on both sides of the house, to prevent our having favour or protection from either.

Such, my countrymen, is our position among your Representatives in Parliament. Yet I wish it were only there that Colonial influence prevails. It is felt even in the Cabinet; it is potent in every department of the state; and no inconsiderable part of the aristocracy of the country is, by property or family connexion, placed under its guidance or control. As to the commercial body, a great part of it, in the principal seats of foreign commerce, London, Liverpool, Bristol, and Glasgow, is, directly or indirectly, chained by private interest to the Colonial cause. Thousands who are not themselves engaged in West India trade, are much connected in business with those who are; and derive from them profitable employment, which might be lost if they were to give offence by openly acting with us, or even by refusing to lend themselves, on certain occasions, to extend the ranks of our opponents. In other political controversies, gentlemen are commonly shy of interfering privately with the conduct or opinions of others; especially when they have the known bias of self-interest to direct their own; but the Colonists, and their con-

nexions among us, rarely in the present case show any such scruples. They are as active and assiduous to make proselytes, as any zealot for a particular creed, and as intolerant also of opposition to their tenets; and instead of disguising, they generally bring forward as a persuasive topic, their own private interests in the question. "I shall be ruined or impoverished by these measures if adopted," is a common argument among them; and it naturally tends, if not to convince, at least to silence, those who are not enough attached to our cause to expose themselves to enmity or ill-will by supporting it. With public men especially, these and other means of influence are unsparingly employed. The case, in short, is the same in England, that it was in France in relation to St. Domingo, and that it still is there in regard to the Slave-trade: the Colonists are too powerful in the Mother Country, and too active by their solicitations and intrigues in private, as well as by their public clamours, to let the claims of justice and humanity, or the interests of the empire at large, have their fair and natural weight.

Under such circumstances, you ought not to be surprised that we have not a more numerous party of active friends among our statesmen and legislators. You might deem it strange rather that there are yet a few generous men in both Houses of Parliament, who dare to make an open stand for national duty and honour, in defiance, not only of the frowns and clamours with which they are publicly assailed, but of the private reproaches and resentments of their West Indian connexions and friends. Much praise be to them for it! and the far richer reward of a self-approving conscience.

There is a more convenient course for them to take. A great majority of those who, in their hearts, wish well to our cause, either absent themselves from their seats when these "*delicate questions*," as they are insidiously called, are to be brought forward; or maintain a prudent silence, and steal out before the division.

I need not claim your gratitude for those who act a better part. Their names are well known, and dear to us. But I hope Dr. LUSHINGTON will forgive me for pointing out an honourable pre-eminence to which he is well entitled. Though linked to West Indian Proprietors by the nearest private connexions, and though the prosperity of his respectable family is involved in that of the Sugar Colonies, we have not a more steady, zealous, or active friend; and he is ever ready to sacrifice time precious to him as a very eminent professional man, when by so doing he sees any probability of rendering service to our cause.

Can I say this, and not be reminded of HENRY BROUGHAM? or can I abstain from hazarding *his* censure also, by a public tribute to his merits? I am the rather prompted to do so, because he and I, till I took leave of parliamentary life, and of all public controversy but this, were warm political opponents, who agreed on scarcely any other subjects than Slavery and the Slave-trade? He too, I know, must have large personal sacrifices to make in maintaining his generous and manly course. The Colonists would do any thing to gain him; or even to suppress a voice which, from his trans-



cedent talents, and commanding influence with a powerful party, cannot be easily put down. He too has professional sacrifices to make; and which nothing short of his almost preternatural industry and energy of mind could enable him possibly to make, in the time that he liberally devotes to us. But there is one peculiar, and still more honourable sacrifice, for which I have long esteemed him, and which has hitherto, I think, not been publicly acknowledged by the friends of the Slaves, though his and their antagonists have often, with their usual personalities, made the occasion of it a subject of reproach to him. It is not, I admit, untrue, that Mr. Brougham when a very young man, and as yet known to the public only by the earliest labours of his masterly pen, had imbibed some of those erroneous views of the Colonial system, and the necessity of maintaining it, which thousands of specious but self-interested tongues and pens have long too successfully propagated in the parent state. In his able and profound work on Colonial Policy, he distinguished too strongly between the Slave-trade (of which he was ever a most determined enemy) and the Slavery that it had established in the Colonies; not certainly in the way of justifying the latter, but so as to extenuate its oppressive character, and to prejudice in some degree the efforts of those who attempted its parliamentary correction. He had never been in the West Indies; and had then had no communication with those who knew that Country, except perhaps with such men as, from regard to their own credit and interest, were sure to mislead and deceive him. Is it then strange, that he, like a large part of the most intelligent of European politicians, should have adopted erroneous views of the facts on which he reasoned?

While the Colonists object to him this short-lived error, let me derive from it an argument that should warn the impartial and uninformed against similar delusions. Gross and dangerous indeed to ordinary judgements must be those mists of falsehood and imposture which such a luminary could not, even with his rising beams, at once penetrate and disperse. But it was impossible that the pervading mind of Mr. Brougham should not, in the progress of its investigations, discover its own mistakes, and the truths from which it had diverged. Much more likely was it, from ordinary human infirmity, that opinions once given to the public should not, when changed, be willingly and openly renounced. But here he has added to the fame of his talents far higher than intellectual honour. He has not only combated the false views with which he was once impressed, but it was from his own lips in the House of Commons that I first heard the public notice of what our enemies perhaps had then forgot. He gratuitously alluded in a speech, now several years old, to his early error, and confessed, with manly candour, that the truths he was then powerfully maintaining were contrary, in some points, to the opinions he had once entertained. When our opponents again think fit to quote Mr. Brougham's early, against his mature opinions, let them not withhold from him the honour, or from our cause the benefit, of this free and dignified avowal.

To return from this digression.—Let me intreat my readers to

weigh well that disheartening condition in which the cause of the poor Slaves at present stands in Parliament; and to inquire fairly what means their associated friends can trust to for its future success, other than the powerful influence of the popular voice. As to the good intentions of our Government, I suspect them not; and if I did, would not prematurely deny or question them. *That* would not advance our hopes; and I am bound in justice to say that there seems no good reason for doubting that our Ministers in general, more especially the noble Earl at the head of the Colonial Department, and Mr. Secretary Canning, would be heartily glad if they could carry into effect the Resolutions of May 1823, to their full extent, by any means that may appear to themselves admissible. To the former I may be naturally partial; for in addition to a sense of his Lordship's claims on the respect and confidence of all who know his manly and amiable character, I feel for him the gratitude due from a father to the kind patron and generous protector of a deserving son: but as an advocate of this sacred cause, I know neither friend nor foe in what its interests demand from me. While therefore I sincerely admit the favourable disposition of both those Ministers, I will not scruple to add an opinion, equally sincere, that they, with most of their colleagues, have been led to entertain views of Colonial Slavery greatly inadequate to its actual guilt, and to the miseries and mischiefs which it involves; and that they have been led, on the other hand, to magnify, in their imaginations, the difficulties and inconveniences of parliamentary measures of reform, as well as to apprehend dangers from them which have no existence.

Nor are these errors wholly imputable to the distance of the circumstances that they have to deal with, and with which they have no personal acquaintance. The search for truth, when impartially pursued, is rarely unsuccessful; but what we wish, we too readily believe; and if the views that I have here given of the formidable extent of Colonial influence in and out of Parliament be at all correct, Ministers must be too desirous to avoid a collision with it, not to receive with willing credulity all such information as may lessen, and with chilling distrust all such evidence as may enhance, the conscientious duty of risking such a conflict. That they in fact listen with too much confidence to the representations of their West Indian friends and partisans, and are more ready to repel than invite information on behalf of the poor Slaves, who have no voice of their own, I have great reason to believe and lament. Yet it must be manifest to every reflecting mind, and more especially to Ministers themselves, that upon every ordinary rule by which human testimony is estimated, the credit due to evidence on the anti-slavery side of this controversy is much greater than can be reasonably claimed on the other. On that of the Planters, self-interest is notorious and avowed:—on ours, it has no existence, except in the wilful mis-statements or distempered imaginations of our opponents.

The Colonists indeed loudly but falsely assert that Government patronage is our excitement and our prize. “No one individual of

ordinary talent," says a late Address from the Council and Assembly of St. Vincent to the Governor, "who has fairly inlisted himself during the last twenty years against the West Indies, *has failed of acquiring either rank or honours, places of wealth and profit under Government, or mercantile advantages of immense amount* \*."

These men are ever at the antipodes of truth. Let them point out a single instance to support this bold assertion—let them name one individual who owes rank, place, wealth, or profit of any kind to his labours in our cause—and I will make a very liberal concession indeed; I will admit that there is one page in that extravagant document that contains some portion of fact. On the other hand, let them name one writer who has ventured to expose, from his own knowledge, their odious system of Slavery, that has not suffered for it in his private character, his interest, or his peace, by their inexorable vengeance; and I will admit that we are all actuated like themselves by self-interested motives.

They affect to complain of malignity and vituperation on our side, though there is not to my knowledge a single passage in any of the anti-slavery publications that fairly supports the charge. When oppression, cruelty, and murder are to be exposed to public view (and this is what the controversy in its nature demands from us), the speaking of them with the reprobation they deserve, is not malice to the offenders, but necessary justice to the subject, and to the moral feelings of the reader. The guilty individuals no doubt may wince, and so may the apologists or partakers of their crimes, and even all who are engaged in a system by which such odious fruits are produced: but these are consequences of which they have no right to complain. To spare their feelings by abstaining from the moral censure that the subject calls for, would be to impair the just effect.

Very different is the case when the advocate of any cause resorts to needless personalities, and brings forward against the private character of his opponents offensive imputations, quite foreign to the merits of the question. But on which side of this controversy are such practices to be found? Certainly not on ours, in any publication with which I am acquainted at least; though few, if any of the works of my fellow-labourers, have wholly escaped my notice. I believe they have all too much confidence in the strength of their cause, if not also too much justice and generous sentiment, to use such unfair and poisonous weapons, even in their own defence against that disgraceful warfare. For my own part, I challenge all my opponents, though some of them, seated in the judicial chair of literary criticism, have with an insidious air of candour affected to condemn me for "a too virulent and accusatory spirit†," to cite a single passage in any of my numerous works on this subject, that is calculated to give needless pain to any man's feelings. I have

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\* Address of the Council and Assembly of St. Vincent's to Governor Brisbane, September 6th, 1823, published here by the West Indian party.

† Quarterly Review, No. 61.

avoided the fault so carefully as even to abstain from mentioning the names of individuals whose crimes, attested by public records, it has been necessary to notice in proof of my general strictures, whenever it could be done without making my references to such cases, and to the public evidence which had reported them imperfect or indistinct\*.

But on the other side, these foul practices are resorted to with the most outrageous licence. Never in any other public controversy was there such a malignant use of personal calumny and invective as that which the Colonial party has systematically employed against its opponents in this cause. I except only the parent controversy on the Slave-trade, in which the humane, virtuous, and pious Ramsay, was one of the first devoted victims of the same illiberal vengeance. From his time to the present, those base arts have been invariably resorted to on that side; and the libels have progressively increased in virulence against each successive combatant on the side of humanity and truth, outraging every private feeling, and violating common decency even, to such a degree, that one of our reverend friends, after long acquiescing in their impotent calumnies on himself, was obliged at last to resort to the law, to silence attacks in the public newspapers on the spotless reputation of his wife!

To support these shameful practices, and other delusions on the British public, large sums have been contributed by the Assemblies, as well as individual Planters. Some of our periodical prints have been taken into standing pay; and our daily press has been widely influenced in a positive, but still more in a negative manner; so that while scandal and falsehood have been profusely propagated, it has been sometimes extremely difficult, or impossible, to obtain a like publicity for defence and refutation.

Such, my countrymen, have been the rewards, and such only,—bosom applause excepted,—of those who have dared to invoke your humanity on behalf of the unfortunate Slaves! Can it be doubted

\* In the Preface to the first volume of my *Delineation of Slavery*, p. 43 and 41, I noticed this forbearance, and appealed to the reader for the general plan and character of the work, as calculated not to excite the passions of the vulgar, but to convince the understandings and consciences of the intelligent and dispassionate, especially gentlemen of the legal profession. If the strictures of the reviewer were just, this appeal would have been very unwise, and would have exposed me to well-merited rebuke; but it would have called for and fairly deserved the citation of, or reference to, at least some single passage inconsistent with the boast. The critic, however, has not condescended to support his general censure by any such specification. He accuses me of using “in almost every page *galling epithets or insinuations*,” but I believe he will not venture to adduce a single epithet in conjunction with the subject of it, in proof of that charge, lest his readers should feel an indignation at the fact, that would make the epithet seem faulty only in being too languid and cold. In the citation of iniquitous and barbarous laws I have doubtless sometimes given them a right appellation, such as might be “galling” to their authors or apologists; but as to “*insinuations*,” they are foreign to the general style and character of my work, and I know not what he means.

I nevertheless owe thanks and gratitude to this unknown opponent; for if unjust to the work, he is more than just in his obliging mention of its author.

that many have been deterred by them from giving a like testimony? But the system, I trust, will lose its terrors; for iteration must have spoiled its effect. Men of any reflection will not easily believe that every gentleman who, having resided in the Colonies, is an enemy to Slavery, and ventures to raise his voice against it, at the expense of offending all the friends he has there, is a profligate, a hypocrite, and a liar.

But I have detained you too long, and must hasten to my practical conclusions.

Such being the alarming posture of the sacred cause which you lately thought triumphant, and the formidable difficulties under which its associated friends at present labour, the important question is, what can we do to sustain it?

The insidious enemies of the cause, and some of its sincere, but much-mistaken friends, exhort you to be inactive and silent; but I should be inexcusable, knowing what I do, if I should concur in that advice, or not avow my firm conviction that your adopting it would be fatal.

Already the Colonists openly, though I trust vainly, boast that the popularity of the Resolutions of May 1823 is on its wane in this country; and unless there shall be a renewed and strong expression of popular feeling at this crisis, to prove the contrary, the opinion will seem to be confirmed. Let those who are credulous enough to believe that the sincere concurrence of the Assemblies is not yet hopeless, ask themselves whether such a persuasion will not be likely to reverse what little disposition may yet remain among them to adopt principles and measures to which they avow their aversion. To assist your views on that question, I will state as a fact, which I have from direct and most satisfactory information (though for the author's sake I dare not name the source of it), the way in which a Bill for the partial adoption of some of the reforms recommended by His Majesty's Government was lately defeated in one of the insular Assemblies. There were in that body several very influential members, who from policy perhaps, if not from better motives, were well disposed towards such a partial compliance; at least in point of form. Others were won over by their persuasion, or by the influence of the Governor; and the Bill was carried at length into a committee with such favourable prospects, that the author of it anticipated with confidence and exultation its speedily passing into a law. I know this latter fact with certainty, having seen it in a letter from the gentleman himself (whose handwriting I know) to a friend in this country. I had little or no doubt therefore that such an Act was passed; and on the recent arrival of a friend from the spot, a late member of the same legislature, I was surprised to hear to the contrary. On my asking the cause of this disappointment, he told me that the Bill had long been delayed in the committee by differences on some of its details, till at length its enemies prevailed so far as to get rid of it, for the session at least, by a suggestion, founded on information from England, that the storm was blowing over here, and that if they took time till another

year they would have no more trouble with such an unpleasant business. On this ground the Bill was suffered to drop, without its express rejection, or any report from the committee.

It is not however in a view only, or chiefly, to such natural effects in the Colonies that I deprecate your inactivity at this juncture. Its consequences in Parliament, and as I believe in the Cabinet itself, would be far more adverse to our hopes. In the Colonial Assemblies we have not a possible chance of ever obtaining any substantial good; and to obtain it here by parliamentary authority, without the continued aid of the popular voice, is almost equally hopeless. Every where your supineness would animate the enemies of our cause, and enervate, if not dishearten, its friends. The Government itself, supposing even its members unanimously with us (and this is more than we can reasonably hope), stands in great need of your assistance. It is a support which none of our friends in the Administration can solicit or seem to desire; for that would spoil its effect; but if any one of them were known to me to be really adverse to your demonstrating, by petitions or other constitutional means, your feelings on this occasion, then I own his sincerity and right intentions would appear to me very doubtful.

Never was such an exercise of the rights of the British people called for on more unexceptionable grounds. It is a privilege often prostituted to factions or party-spirited purposes; and still oftener used, by particular classes of men, to promote their private interests, when distinct from, and perhaps opposed to, the good of the people at large. But in this case, we have no factious views to promote, no selfish dispositions to indulge: we have none but purely national, or still higher than national, objects. For what can Englishmen more justifiably and meritoriously solicit of their representatives in Parliament, than to maintain the moral character of their country, to deliver themselves from national guilt, and to release them from the dreadful necessity of maintaining a cruel oppression, by dipping their hands, upon every resistance of it, deep in innocent blood.

Our adversaries have furnished us with a further argument; and upon their principles, though certainly not on mine, a stronger one. They allege that they shall be entitled to indemnities, the amount of which they magnify beyond all rational bounds, out of the public purse; they demand to be indemnified not only for the enfranchisement of their Slaves, if that should be enacted by law, but for every alleviation of their bondage. We ought to indemnify them, they contend, for abolishing even those aggravations of Slavery which the Mother Country was so far from having sanctioned, that she knew not of their existence, and the reality of which their own Assemblies and public agents, upon her inquiries, stoutly denied.

I will not here examine the merits of this claim; but if it has any just foundation, surely your petitions are pre-eminently right and decorous on the part of the people; and useful, instead of embarrassing, to a well-intentioned Government. They are, in that case, virtual offers to bear the pecuniary burthen incident to the

reforms which your moral feelings lead you to desire; and what can be more acceptable to Ministers sincerely disposed to such a work? If we could do them such injustice as to suppose them not in earnest, their wishes would deserve from you no regard; but on the opposite, and I trust the right assumption, the petitions of the people cannot be too numerous or importunate for their satisfaction and their ease.

And here by the way, we have another argument, a decisive, though hitherto I think a neglected one, against the course that has been most unhappily taken. The Colonists contend (and if their claims for compensation are just, they rightly contend) that the damage and the indemnity should go hand in hand; and that it would be unjust to the Slave-owner to impair his property first, and leave it for subsequent consideration and enactment, when and how he shall be compensated. *But how can this possibly consist with referring the work to the Assemblies?* What! are the Assemblies of Barbadoes, St. Kitt's, or Jamaica to dip their hands into the purses of the people of England? Can it be left to *them* to annex compensatory provisions to the reforms they are desired to enact?

This obvious consideration might suffice to prove, if it were not otherwise sufficiently manifest, that the cry for indemnities is a mere bugbear to frighten you from your righteous purpose. They must well know that this part of the case can be examined and disposed of by Parliament alone; and yet they tell you it must be incorporated with reforms, against the interposition of Parliament in which, even to the extent of discussions upon the subject, they vehemently protest.

The opposition raised to us on this ground, however, ought not to be noticed without stronger condemnation than its mere inconsistency and insincerity deserve. Familiar though it is to us, I have never been able to regard its countenance in Parliament without astonishment, or without feeling as an Englishman ought to do when his country is degraded and dishonoured.

Let it be supposed that, as between the Planter and the State, compensation ought to be a simultaneous measure with reform, or if you will, a previous one; still, what is the reference to the one, as an objection to the other, but a shameful appeal to the avarice or economical prudence of the country against its honour and its conscience? To the moral rights of the Slave, it is just as valid a bar, as a plea of associated robbers would be against making restitution to the injured party, that it would require a contribution from the gang. Even this illustration is inadequate; for the question here is, not merely whether we shall restore, but whether, as the alternative, we shall add wrong to wrong, inflicting the same calamities on generations yet unborn, enslaving the offspring, lest we should have to pay for the redemption of the parents, and subduing all resistance from either, by the effusion of innocent blood!

Nevertheless, this base and odious argument is boldly and perpetually brought forward against us; and greatly augments, perhaps,

the difficulties of those who are not only the keepers of the national conscience, but the responsible stewards of the national purse. In this view then also, the case loudly calls for popular interposition; for however powerful any administration may be in comparison with the party systematically opposed to it, a strong league of particular interests, potent enough on both sides of the House of Commons to control the influence of the Crown with many of its own adherents, and at the same time to neutralize the Opposition as a body, may be more than it can effectually resist; especially when it will be the effect of a just measure to entail a serious burthen on the country.

There are acknowledged cases in which a strong expression of the popular voice, aided by a right use of the elective franchise, is the only remedy for public evils that our Constitution affords. I may, without offence I hope to any truly national party, allude to the well known case of Mr. Fox's Indian Bill, as illustrating the remark. I speak not in censure of that measure, or disparagement of the great and now departed statesmen who supported it. They may have been right in their judgement;—as I doubt not they were in their intentions;—but a concert of men of opposite political principles was formed, upon what were supposed to be personal and particular interests, with a view to give law to the Crown and Parliament, in opposition to what was contended to be the duty and interest of the country at large. An appeal to the people therefore was strongly made, and cordially answered; and the result was, that a new spirit appeared in the House of Commons, and the coalition was defeated. It was alleged on that occasion, that a fourth estate was about to be created, dangerous to the Constitution; but in the present case it might be with greater reason alleged that a fourth estate actually exists; not indeed under the management of a permanent East India Board, but of a West Indian Committee, which, if not dangerous to the Constitution, is so at least in a high degree to the public morals, the honour, and the prosperity of this great empire. The same remedy is therefore urgently called for, in order that public principles may have fair play; and that the Government itself may be sustained in right measures against a too powerful faction.

I call upon you then solemnly, as fellow-countrymen and fellow-Christians, to exert yourselves to the utmost on this great and interesting occasion. If you would prevent further sacrifices of your manufacturing, commercial, and maritime interests, of your revenues and military means, and of the security even of your Colonies themselves; if you would maintain the independence and dignity of your Parliament, and its constitutional supremacy over the distant dependencies of the empire, without which they are a degrading incumbrance and a nuisance; if you would redeem the sacred pledges you have given to the unfortunate Slaves, and prevent the perpetuation on them and their innocent offspring of a bondage disgraceful to the British and the Christian name; and if you would rescue yourselves from the abhorred necessity of imbruing your hands in



their blood, when and as often as intolerable oppression urges them to a hopeless resistance,—now, *now*, is your time to be active.

The constitutional and effectual path is plain. You are or soon will be solicited for your votes by those who wish to be your representatives in the House of Commons. Let your first question to every candidate be, Are you a Proprietor of Slaves, or a West India merchant? If the answer is in the affirmative, I would recommend to you a positive refusal, unless he be one of the very few who have already proved themselves true friends to our cause; or who, being known to you as a man of probity and honour, will give you the security of his promise henceforth to support it in the House. But whoever the candidate may be, demand of him, as the condition of your support, that he will solemnly pledge himself to attend in his place whenever any measure is brought forward for the mitigation and progressive termination of Slavery by parliamentary enactments; and that he will give his vote for every measure of that kind, not inconsistent with the temperate and prudent spirit of the Resolutions of May 1823, and the recommendations of His Majesty's Government founded on those resolutions. Unless such a pledge is given in these, or equivalent terms, and more especially so as to exclude the subterfuge of still committing the work to the Assemblies, the engagement will be of little value, or rather of none at all. Add to this right use of your own vote, the widest and most active influence you can employ with your brother electors to engage them to follow your example. Let Committees for the purpose be formed in every county, city, and borough in the United Kingdom, in which any independent suffrages are to be found; and let Public Meetings be called, and the exhortations of the Press be employed, to extend the same salutary work; and that work, let me add, alone; avoiding all political distinctions, and inviting men of both or all parties, to unite in promoting that single object.

But it is not by such means only that we solicit your assistance. The petitions of the people led to the Resolutions of May 1823. Let the same means be speedily employed again for carrying them into effect. I trust that the tables of Parliament soon after its first assembling will be covered deeper than ever with new and earnest petitions from every part of the United Kingdom. Let them be temperate and respectful, but firm; and if need be, reiterated also, till their object shall be effectually obtained; and let your representatives on every occasion be requested to present and support them.

I cannot promise, my countrymen, that by such means your generous wishes will be fully and certainly accomplished; but one end at least, and an inestimable one, you will be sure to obtain. You will deliver your own consciences from any-participation in the guilt which you have used your best endeavours to restrain.

To this most important end, indeed, one ulterior effort may be necessary. The consumers of West India sugar are unquestionably abettors of the iniquitous means by which it is produced; and the only excuse for our consciences in not hitherto renouncing the use of it, has been the fear of prejudicing our cause by a premature resort

to such a measure. My views on that subject being already before the public, I need not dwell upon them here; but the opinion which I now share with all the friends of our cause whose sentiments are known to me is, that should we not obtain some satisfactory measure from Parliament in the approaching session, it will become the clear duty of all who regard Colonial Slavery as cruel and unjust, to renounce without further delay the use of its produce themselves, and to recommend the same measure to others. The failure of Mr. Brougham's motion, if unhappily it should fail, ought I think to be a signal throughout the country, to all the friends of reformation, that the moment is arrived for their adoption of this last resort.

Mean time, let not any man who fears God, or loves his country and his fellow-creatures, think that this is a case in which he can warrantably be neutral or passive. It might be so under an arbitrary form of Government; but every man in this free country who has a vote, or a voice that can influence the electors or elected, has in cases like the present a conscientious duty to perform, for the neglect of which he will be justly and seriously responsible. Every degree of such influence that we possess is not merely a privilege, but a trust; and the laws made or maintained by the representatives of a free people are virtually of their own enactment.

Let me, in conclusion, address myself not only to my countrymen at large, but to such distinct descriptions among them, as may be influenced by particular considerations not felt by all.

To you, friends of universal freedom, who glory in the old appellation of *Whigs*, and regard all absolute authority, civil or political, with pre-eminent suspicion and dislike; to you in whose eyes even the liberties of Englishmen are not perfect, or require at least additional securities; to *you* my first invocation shall be made. What a reproach would it be to your principles, if you should not be among the foremost in endeavouring to relax the heavy and degrading yoke of private Slavery in our colonies? What, in comparison with *that*, is political thralldom, even to a foreign power; or what are civil and military despotisms, in the worst forms of them known in Europe? In what region, and in what age, was grosser violation ever done to the natural rights of man? or, to avoid terms that have been abused, where or when did the institutions of mankind so completely annihilate, for the sake of the despotic few, every benefit that the subjugated mass can be alleged to have derived from the civil union?

You are zealous in the cause of the oppressed Greeks; and the feeling does you honour. You reprobate strongly the illiberal despotism that presses down its yoke on the necks of the unfortunate Spaniards; and it is a right and generous indignation. Can you then be insensible to the far more intolerable wrongs, to the far more goading oppression, which the poor Africans suffer under your own dominion? The Greeks have not yet been driven by the cart-whip; and many a tyrant, more illiberal and ungrateful than Ferdinand, is maintained by British bayonets, as he by French ones, on the petty thrones of the Plantations. Surely, also, it ought to be a

heart-stirring distinction, that the Greeks and Spaniards have not to accuse us as the authors of their miseries ; while there is scarcely a Slave in the British West Indies on whom, or his ancestors, we did not originally impose the cruel yoke he wears ; and that by atrocious means, which we have ourselves since confessed to have been repugnant to humanity and justice.

Take the lead then, as it will well become you to do, in the present arduous and most righteous struggle. You have, I too well know, some inconsistent partisans who would warp you from your natural course for their own private interests ; but they are unworthy of the appellation they assume. The name of Whig is a brand on the forehead of every man who is a defender of Colonial Slavery.

To you whom your opponents designate by the less popular name of *Tories*, I would next appeal. The Slave-masters strive to enlist your honest prepossessions on their side. They would persuade you that their cause is that of loyalty against disaffection, and established government against democratical innovation. Not so thought your Johnsons and your Humes, your Gibbons and your Horsleys ; not so your Pitts and Grenvilles, nor your virtuous and lamented Percival. The very reverse is the truth. It is the nature of the Slave system to make the masters contentious, turbulent, and impatient of all authority but their own (as Burke, though in more softened language, has remarked). You found it to your cost in America ; and you find it now in the West Indies. Ask your Ministers who have presided in the Colonial department, in what part of the empire His Majesty's subjects are the hardest to govern and to please ; and where they have always been the most annoyed with turbulent opposition to the constituted powers, conducted with factious violence ; and I am sure the answer will be,—in the West Indies. Their distance, their impotence in a national view, and the general frivolity of their subjects of dispute with their governors, have kept them in general from much public notice in this country. But their feuds are a standing nuisance in the departments of State which have the difficult duty to examine and compose them. Slave questions are so far from being the sole causes of agitation, that by placing all the Whites at present in one party, or at least in the only one that dares utter a political voice, they have rather tended to lessen than increase their ordinary interior dissensions. At a time when no such questions were depending, I once heard the late Lord Castlereagh, then at the head of the Colonial department, complain that there was hardly a single Colony, I think he said not one, in which he had not some very troublesome petty controversy between the governors and the governed on his hands.

The intemperance of their malcontent spirit is not less remarkable than its restlessness. To the most disrespectful and contumacious remonstrances, their Assemblies scruple not to add, on very slight occasions, threatenings to stop, and sometimes actually to stop, all supplies for the support of their public interior establishments ; and even their trivial contributions of barracks, or other local provisions,

for the accommodation of the troops which we maintain at such a fearful cost for their security. They have sometimes proceeded to suspend all legislative business till the governor at length has been compelled to dissolve them. Nor is that remedy often effectual: for resistance to the King's Government, however rude and intemperate, is almost sure to be popular among these men who punish all resistance of their own domestic government with death. The same factious representatives are re-elected; and the ultimate event too commonly is, that Ministers, wearied out with their pertinacity, and with the public inconveniences that ensue, make sacrifices to appease them, such as ill consist with a due regard to the maintenance of the royal authority, and the credit of its faithful delegates. A governor, for instance, is not rarely recalled, for a firmness of conduct that entitled him to applause; and when Ministers at the same time show that they approved it, by appointing him immediately to the command of some other colony.

In the present case, I need not say how far they are from deserving your sympathies on the score of dutiful submission, or deference towards either the Parliament or the Crown. They set both at open defiance, and deal out menaces of forcible resistance, which, however absurd and ridiculous, do not the less manifest a turbulent and disloyal spirit.

And whose are the rights and interests that they thus violently oppose and trample on? A disaffected populace? No; but an unfortunate class, mocked with the name of His Majesty's subjects, who fondly look for protection and relief only to the King and his Government, and fain would, but cannot "fly from petty tyrants to the throne." Be not deceived then by the crafty pretences and idle clamours of these pseudo-loyalists; nor let your honourable principles be disgraced by a supposed affinity to theirs. As far as constitutional interests are concerned at all, their cause is the very opposite of yours. It is plainly derogatory to the constitutional power and glory of the Crown, that the mass of the Colonial population, like the vassals of the feudal barons, should have intermediate sovereigns, to whom, much more than to the King or his laws, their allegiance must be paid. In their degraded breasts the noble sentiment of loyalty can find no place. The master, to them is every thing, and the monarch an empty name. They find that they are subjects by the sword only, not the sceptre. They find it only when their blood is to be shed, either by judicial sentence, or military execution, in the name of the King, against whom they are preposterously said to have offended or rebelled, in most cases of insubordination to their masters.

Among other consequences of this odious system that ought to be offensive to every liberal and loyal heart, the authority of the Sovereign is so degraded as to be actually made subordinate and ministerial to that of the master; not only by enforcing obedience to him, but by the actual execution of his vindictory mandates directed to the King's officers; and that to an extent of punishment greater than is inflicted here for most felonious offences. By the master's

order alone, without any examination of its justice, his Slaves are received into His Majesty's prisons, and, by his officers, attached to a chain and driven by cart-whips, in a file of similar victims, and of convicts judicially condemned to that harsh punishment, to hard labour in the public streets or roads\*.

The pedestals of the British throne are law, justice, and well-regulated freedom; all which this odious institution of private Slavery subverts. Its most glorious and darling prerogative is mercy; but of this the Slave is no object. No royal grace can absolve him from those harsh penalties which the master thinks fit to adjudge,—not even those which I have last mentioned, of which the Crown is the executioner. How, my loyal fellow subjects, can your feelings be expected to patronize a system like this?

Servants of God, of every description, my last and surest appeal is made to you. Of whatever faith you are, Churchmen, Dissenters, Catholics, Theists of every kind; if you believe that there is a God, the common Parent of the human race, who delights in justice and mercy, behold a cause that demands your strenuous sup-

\* See the most recent Act of Jamaica; and like Acts of other islands. See also my *Law of Slavery*, p. 251 to 354.

To show the reader how this punishment is administered by the Executive Government on the mere mandate of the master, I extract the following account of it by one of the public apologists of the system, the late Mr. Dallas.

"Negroes are often sent hither by their masters and mistresses as a punishment &c.; and according to the supposed heinousness of their guilt, the correction, that is, the torture of the cattle whip, is superadded."

"These unhappy wretches (I have reckoned near a hundred linked to the same chain) are employed to dig and carry stones, remove rubbish, and to perform all the most fatiguing offices of the public. The chain being fixed about the leader, is carried round the bodies of the followers, leaving a sufficient distance to walk without treading on each other's heels; and to each it is secured by a padlock. As soon as they are thus yoked, the gate is thrown open, and the poor animals are driven out by a Negro driver, attended by a White driver, both with cattle whips in their hands. Sometimes the White driver rides on a mule.

"You may imagine that in the great number of persons thus fastened to each other, without the least attention to the differences of age or of strength, it is not very probable that an equal pace among them can be kept up throughout the day as they move about. They are set upon a brisk walk almost approaching to a trot, and woe be to those whom fatigue first forces to flag. The never-ceasing sound of the cattle whip long keeps a regularity in the slight sinking curve of the intervening links of the chain; but nature will return; the feeble will begin to pull upon the stronger, the intervening links will lose their regular curve: here they become stretched to the utmost; there they sink nearly to the ground; the weak add the weight of their exhausted limbs to the strong, and the strong tread upon the heels of the weak. This the drivers remedy as much as possible by their cattle whips, till nature, quite worn out, is at last driven back to the work-house."—DALLAS'S *SHORT JOURNEY IN THE WEST INDIES*.

Even after a Slave has been prosecuted capitally in the King's court and acquitted, the prosecuting master has been known so far to show his contempt for the authority of the laws, as to send the injured man to be punished for an indefinite time in this cruel manner, on the same false imputation; and thus compel the Crown to be his minister of vengeance, after he has been tried at the King's suit and pronounced by his own judges to be innocent. (See a case cited in my *Law of Slavery*, p. 352.)

Can a greater degradation of royal authority than this be imagined?

port. The Slave-masters would craftily divide you. They would avail themselves of your theological differences; and especially would persuade you, if they could, that those who earnestly maintain this cause of God and man, are all fanatics and enthusiasts. But what creed will be found to countenance a system like theirs, when its true nature is developed? Even the Mahometan faith proscribes it, though in a much milder form, except as a scourge for unbelievers.

What then! is it pushing religious zeal too far to say that innocent fellow-creatures ought not to be left in a perpetual hereditary Slavery? that unoffending men, women, and children, ought not to be deprived of all civil and human rights, and condemned to toil for life, like cattle, under the whips of the drivers? Is it enthusiasm, to hold that a Slavery so rigorous as to have destroyed thousands and tens of thousands of its victims in our Sugar Colonies, and which is still so fatal that the most prolific of the human race cannot maintain their numbers in it, ought to be lenified by law? Is it fanaticism, to regard a bondage imposed by acknowledged crime, as one that cannot be rightfully protracted, and fastened on the progeny for ever? Then let religion and wrong, religion and cruelty, religion and murder, shake hands. The *Thurtels* and *Proberts* among us may claim to be rational religionists; and rail at their prosecutors as saints, enthusiasts, and fanatics. Perhaps indeed they do; for it seems to be the fashion to stigmatize by those terms every degree of moral sensibility that exceeds our own.

To such of you as are deeply impressed with the truth and importance of the doctrines peculiar to Christianity, and zealous for their propagation, and to such of you as are accustomed to observe and recognise the hand of Divine Providence in the government of the world, there is much more that I could wish to say. I might appeal to the principles you hold most sacred, for the duty of lending your aid to reform an impious system which shuts out the light of the Gospel, and violates in the grossest manner all its precepts; which keeps in a cruel thralldom the minds, as well as bodies, of its unfortunate victims; and adds to its other enormities anti-christian persecution. I might show the inconsistency of the charitable efforts you are making to convert your fellow-creatures in the most distant and uncivilized regions of the globe, while you suffer your fellow-subjects to be kept in pagan darkness, and the vilest moral degradation, not by choice, but by compulsion, through a domestic tyranny which your own power, within your own territories, impiously upholds. I might prove to your entire conviction how hopeless it is that the poor Slaves in general should be made Christians, in more than name, by any means that have been adopted, or can be used, without raising their temporal condition.

Many of you also, I doubt not, might be strongly impressed by a clear and comprehensive view of that wonderful chain of events, which indicates, as plainly as events unexplained by Revelation can indicate, to human eyes, the hand of Divine Providence avenging the wrongs of the poor enslaved Africans, and favouring, I

trust, our feeble efforts for their deliverance. The "signs of the times" are in this respect well worthy of the careful observation of every pious mind; and it is no presumption to deduce from them, not a new rule of conduct, but confirmation and encouragement in a purpose prescribed to us by the clearest principles of Christian duty.

But I think it best to abstain at present from these important and interesting topics. To do any justice to them here, would be to extend too far the length of this address. My views on some of them are already, though partially, before the public; and I hope ere long to present to the religious friends of our cause, in a separate publication, a defence of the Bible against the foul charge of its countenancing Colonial Slavery; to which I propose to add a summary of those very extraordinary facts and coincidences that indicate, to my firm conviction, a purpose of Divine Providence to avenge, and I trust also to deliver, the long oppressed African race.

Mean time, enough I trust has been said to satisfy not only all who are actuated by Christian principles, but all who are friends to their species at large, or to their country, if unbiased by Colonial influence, that it is now our duty to be active.

Dismiss the idle hope that Slavery will ever be abolished, or materially alleviated, by the will of the masters, or by the laws of West Indian legislators. The often repeated, and often refuted pretence of actual improvements, believe me, is all delusion. The worst and most destructive branches of this oppression (excess of labour enforced by brutal means, and insufficiency of sustenance) are as prevalent as ever; and must be so from the necessary effects of the system, till controlled by parliamentary authority. I affirm it as a man who certainly knows the case; and who is preparing to adduce such evidence of its true nature as will satisfy the most incredulous.

Reject the insidious suggestions that your interference is needless; and that it implies distrust of our Ministers. I have shown that without the aid of the popular voice their good intentions must be fruitless. The Government, and the Parliament itself, are in thralldom to the dominating influence of our too powerful enemies. Examine fairly the facts I have adduced, and you will admit they can no otherwise be explained. It is obvious, as I before remarked, that supposing the Cabinet unanimous in desiring petitions from the people, it is an interposition which they cannot solicit, or appear to approve. While the proper effect would be spoiled, the offence to the Colonial party would be not diminished, but enhanced. You must judge of the inclination of Ministers therefore on this occasion from the reason of the case, and from what you believe of their principles; and I ask of you only to believe them sincere, in the views which some of them have strongly professed in Parliament, and all of them apparently adopted. To ascribe to them insincerity in such a case would be highly offensive, and, as I believe, unjust.

But should we suspect, or know, their wishes to be adverse to ours, our duties as men, as Englishmen, and as Christians, would

remain the same. We should be unworthy of all those appellations and deserve to forfeit the privileges that belong to them, if, knowing our country to be the abettor and upholder of gross injustice and oppression, we should from complaisance to any men, or any party, decline to exercise our constitutional rights on the side of the injured and oppressed.

Come forward then with your petitions; instruct your representatives; give or withhold your suffrages for the next Parliament and use your personal influence throughout the country; all in such a manner as may best promote the success of this great and sacred cause.

If you succeed, you will give a new triumph to the British Constitution, you will exalt the glory of your country, in that best point of her moral elevation, and recommend her to the favour of Heaven. You may rescue also yourselves and your posterity from several calamities, which I firmly believe are now impending over us notwithstanding our apparent prosperity, not only from the natural effects of our pernicious system in the Colonies, if longer persisted in, but from the just vengeance of a righteous and all-directing Providence.

If you fail, you will at least have the inestimable consolation that you have done what you could "to undo the heavy burthen and to let the oppressed go free," and that the sins and calamities of your country, however pernicious in their consequences to yourselves or your children, were evils which you could not avert.

## APPENDIX.

EXTRACT from Sir W. YOUNG's West India Common Place Book, p. 218.

TABLES, showing the Mortality of Troops in the West Indies (exclusive of those who fell in action) during Seven Years, from 1796 to 1802 inclusive, compiled from Regimental Returns collected by JOHN SAYER, Esq. Commissary in the Windward and Leeward Islands during that period.

European Soldiers.					Negro Soldiers.			Officers.
	Largest force.	Medium monthly returns.	Died.	Per Cent.	Force.	Died.	Per Cent.	Died.
1796. April	19676	15881	6484	40 $\frac{1}{4}$	2495	75		
1797. April	13627	11503	3766	32 $\frac{1}{2}$	3080	118	3	226
1798. April	9192	8416	1602	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	3055	252	4	99
1799. February	7654	7202	876	11 $\frac{1}{4}$	3354	258	8	38
1800. February	8840	7890	1221	15 $\frac{1}{2}$	4320	286	7 $\frac{3}{4}$	24
1801. February	11745	10315	2540	22 $\frac{3}{4}$	4604	276	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	58
1802. February	10198	9038	990	11	3840	199	6	104
Original Army.	19676		17173				5	41
								590

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